



**Razer eXactMat Mouse Pad**  
**Reviewed by Barry Little - June 23, 2005**  
**Manufacturer: Razer USA, LTD**

You hear a lot about hi-performance mice these days, and how they can often make the difference in scoring a decisive victory over an in-game or online opponent, or making your *Photoshop* or *CAD* session a joy—or make you rip your cheap, crappy mouse out the port and hurling it through the nearest window in frustration. But have you ever considered that the surface you use your mouse on is just as important as the mouse itself? Today, we'll take a look at the **Razer eXactMat Mouse Pad**, to see if a high-dollar mouse pad really can make a difference in how you work and play on your PC.

Whether your mouse is mechanical or optical, the surface the mouse tracks on is just as important as the mouse itself. Cheap mouse pads with fabric surfaces are notorious for attracting dust and dirt, shedding as they wear out from normal wear and tear. The ones with vinyl surfaces accumulate oils and perspiration from your hand—mix that with dust and residue from your favorite snacks over time and you've got a mouse pad peppered with waxy patches of gunk. Soon, the build-up of filth takes its toll on the ball and tracking mechanism of mechanical mice, and in extreme cases the sensor on optical mice, and their Teflon-coated "feet." I had a support call at work once where an end-user's non-functioning mouse was due to a build-up of spilled chicken noodle soup and God-knows what else on the sensor of a *Logitech* optical mouse. Mouse pads with reflective surfaces or with large light or white-colored areas or unusual patterns can wreck havoc on the sensors of some optical mice. The end result in all of these scenarios whether the mouse is mechanical or optical, is the same—poor and erratic mouse performance.



The *Razer eXactMat* comes with a gel wrist pad.



At 10.4" x 13", the *eXactMat* is pretty big for a mouse pad. Note the no-skid pads. There's another set on the other side—the *eXactMat* is a *dual-sided* mouse pad.



Here's a closer look at the wrist pad. The flexible, no-skid surface insures the *eXactMat*, will stay put during the most intense gaming sessions.

# BRnR

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A good mouse pad should be durable, easy to clean, with a surface that provides optimal tracking for any kind of mouse. Gamers who play fast-paced first-person shooters or action games, and designers who need precise control in programs like Photoshop tend to push the boundaries of mouse performance. Smooth, ultra-fast and precise mouse motion and control are a must for these demanding users.

Right about the same time hi-performance mice like the ones made by *Logitech* and *Razer* were coming into their own, mouse pads designed to compliment and enhance the performance of these mice began to surface (no pun intended). Made of exotic (for a mouse pad) materials like rigid, high impact plastic or aluminum, with aggressive styling and names, they commanded a much higher price tags than your 99-cent *Office Max* or *CompUSA* special with the cute little puppies on it.

Not to be outdone by other "boutique" mouse pad companies like *RatPadz* and *fUnc*, *Razer*, the creators of the *Boomslang*, *Viper* and *Diamondback* mice that have won critical acclaim and notoriety at professional gaming events and LAN parties everywhere, released a mouse pad worthy of their phenomenally successful line of gaming mice—the *Razer eXactMat*.

The first thing you notice about the *eXactMat* is its size. At 10.4" x13" x 0.1" (265 x 330 x 2.5mm), this thing is *big*. If you've ever been frustrated by a tiny mouse pad that has less coverage than a diaper on a baby's bottom, you're gonna love the *eXactMat*.



The *eXactMat* can be used with or without the wrist pad...



...like so.



The *Razer eXactMat's* wrist pad is covered in a durable fabric which should absorb perspiration during those red-hot fragging sessions much better than the vinyl pads found on other products. The only drawback is the cool, *Razer Tri-Serpent* logo will eventually wear off.

Ergonomically shaped and made of durable anodized aluminum, the *eXactMat* comes with a gel-filled wrist rest covered in a tough, comfortable black fabric with *Razer's*



signature green Tri-serpent logo. The wrist rest is unique in that it's attached to a rubber, no-skid mat, and separate from the *eXactMat*. If you choose to use the wrist pad, simply place the *eXactMat* on top of it.

If you'd rather not use the wrist rest, the *eXactMat* has a set of no-skid pads on each corner, on both sides of the mouse pad—no, that's not a typo. The *eXactMat* has a special black non-slip, anti-reflective and abrasion resistant coating on *each side* of the mouse, emblazoned with the neon-green *Razer eXactMat* logo, with a different texture for *two* types of mouse performance. The side with the smoothest texture is labeled "*Speed*," which is designed to give the highest sensitivity possible, and geared towards gamers. The other side has a coarser texture, and is labeled "*Control*," for users who need more precise control, like your Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator users. Both surfaces are easy to clean with a cloth dampened in cool water.

Using a Razer Diamondback mouse, I tested the *eXactMat* on both sides using *Photoshop CS2* and *Microsoft Publisher 2003*, and playing *DOOM<sup>3</sup>*, *Half-Life 2*, *Brothers in Arms*, *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*, *Star Wars Republic Commando* and *Far Cry*, comparing the *eXactMat* to a *RatPadz GS Mouse Pad* with and without the PolyGFX *RatPadz Skin*. The PolyGFX-skinned *RatPadz* approximated the "*Control*" side of the *eXactMat*, while the *RatPadz* without the PolyGFX skin has a rougher texture. The sensitivity on my Diamondback was set to 5.5 for Photoshop CS2 and Microsoft Publisher 2003, which is how I normally adjust it for productivity applications. For the games, I cranked the sensitivity up to 10.0, my usual setting.

Because the Razer Diamondback mouse is designed for the best possible performance on almost any surface, it was very tough to tell the difference between both *RatPadz* mouse pads and the *eXactMat* pad used on the "*Control*" side for Photoshop CS2 and Publisher—all three gave pretty good results.

Using the "*Speed*" side of the *eXactMat*, particularly in games gave enough of a discernable difference to give me an additional edge in taking down an Imp or Zombie lunging out of the darkness in *DOOM<sup>3</sup>*; splattering those annoying Geonosians in *Star Wars Republic Commando*, or controlling Sam Fisher's ultra-cool, cat-like moves in *Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory*. If you have a mechanical mouse, you'll probably find the difference between the *Speed* and *Control* side of the *eXactMat* more dramatic than someone using an optical mouse. The quality and condition of your mouse will undoubtedly play a roll in how well the *eXactMat* (or any mouse pad for that matter) works for you.

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As I said earlier, the eXactMat has two sides. Note the ultra-smooth finish of the "Speed" side, which is what you'd want to use for games where instantaneous response usually means the difference between winning and losing.

Flip the eXactMat over for the "Control" side. Note the coarser texture here. This side is designed for when you want slower, more precise control.

I put the eXactMat up against the RatpadzGS Mouse Pad—with and without the PolyGFX Ratpadz Skins. The Ratpadz with the skin installed comes closest to the surface of the eXactMat's "Control" side.

The Razer eXactMat is a lot more comfortable to use over longer periods of time for work or gaming, than the RatPadz, due to its larger surface area, and the gel wrist-pad. Also, the surface of my desk is no longer perfectly flat—chalk that up to years of having a massive 21-inch CRT monitor that weighed as much as your average Sumo wrestler sitting on it. As a result, unfortunately, the RatPadz doesn't sit flat on the somewhat warped surface of my desktop. The rubber pad attached to the eXactMat's wrist rest not only improves its no-skid capabilities, but it also allows the eXactMat to sit level on my desk—an added and welcome bonus.

Of course, what works or feels right for me, may not for you. What I might consider to be just right in terms of sensitivity and response time may be too slow, fast or "twitchy" for someone else. No matter how impressive the specs or marketing material—at the end of the day, satisfaction with mouse performance weighs more on the preferences and perceptions of the user, than anything else.

Going for a penny shy of \$35.00 directly at Razer's own Razer Store, like most high-performance mouse pads, the eXactMat is hardly what you'd call cheap. The RatPadz GS mouse pad is roughly a third of the eXactMat's price—and you could probably buy a dozen or more average mouse pads at your local computer store for that price. So is the **Razer eXactMat Mouse Pad** worth the price tag, and is it *really* that good?

If you're *serious* about computing for work and/or play, and want a durable, easy to clean mouse pad that has the flexibility of two mouse surfaces for speed and control, plus an excellent gel wrist pad for comfort, then the answer to both questions is *yes*.



## Final Score:



### Summary:

**Pros:** Works great with high performance mice. Durable, easy-to-clean Anodized Aluminum. No-skid dual-sided design—"Speed" side designed for lightning-fast gaming performance and higher-resistance "Control" side for more precise control for productivity applications. Reasonably priced for a hi-performance/"enthusiast"



mouse pad. Comfortable, detachable gel wrist rest.

**Cons:** Large footprint; costs more compared to your average mouse pad. Tangible benefit of "Speed" vs. "Control" side of the eXactMat depends on the mouse used.

### **Razer eXactMat Mouse Pad**

**Manufactured by:** Razer USA, Ltd. ([www.razerzone.com](http://www.razerzone.com))

**Distributed by:** Razer USA, Ltd.

#### **Specifications:**

Two-sided, longer-lasting Anodized Aluminum mousing surfaces

"SPEED" for high-sensitivity users

"CONTROL" side for low-sensitivity and professional design users

Over-sized and uniquely-shaped, 10.4" x 13" x 0.1" (265 x 330 mm x 2.5 mm)

Jet-black with Razer™ green logo

Non-slip, anti-reflective, abrasion resistant hard coat

Package includes specially-designed gel-filled wrist rest