

# Your Bike & You

## Keeping Safe!



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## [Bike Repair 101](#)

There are at least 2 great reasons to do your own bike repairs. Commonly known as DIY (do it yourself) bike repair, one of the main reasons is to simply save money as opposed to paying a bike repair shop potentially hundreds of dollars when you can do it yourself. The other advantage to doing your own bike repairs is you get to learn more about how your bike works from a mechanical perspective.

For example, changing a bike tire is quite simple but if you've never done it, it may appear to be a technically challenging task. However, it's as simple as peeling part of the tire off the rim (though not entirely) until you can grab the inner tube. Pull the inner tube out while leaving the tire completely on the rim. You can take the tire off if you prefer but it's not necessary. Now, unravel the new inner tube and carefully place it back inside the tire. Sometimes, it might be easier to inflate the new flattened inner tube slightly just to give it some form but again, it's not necessary. Once the new inner tube is in place, simply inflate the tube and you now have a new inflated tire! It's easier than it might seem.

While many repairs can be easy enough for you to tackle, there may be times where you simply need the expert help of a bike repair professional. For example, if your rim is out of alignment or you need calibration of your gears, etc. then it's most likely best to bring your bike in to the pros but most bike repairs can be done by yourself and you'll find you not only save money but it's fun to "get your hands dirty" while learning more about your bike in the process. Have fun and give it a go!



## **Your Bike Maintenance**

Learning to ride a bike is no big deal. If you fall off, just brush yourself off and climb back on. Learning how to keep your bike from falling apart can be just as easy.

Bicycle maintenance is vital to the performance and preservation of your ride. Without proper maintenance, your bike will quickly go from a lean, mean, two-wheeled machine, to a squeaky, rusty, pant leg munching mess. Keeping your bicycle in top condition requires regular protective and preventive maintenance, some of which can be done by you. Other jobs may require the skills of a professional cycle repairer.

### **Tyres;**

When riding a bicycle, most of the load and pressure falls directly on the tyres. Check your air pressure to be sure the tyres are inflated as per the manufacturer's specifications. Tyres should be inspected on a regular basis for any signs of ripping, or wear and tear. Wheels need regular tuning and adjustment, and should be checked for dents and twists caused by collisions or falls. Spinning is the best way to check a wheel. If the wheel shakes from side to side as it spins, it will need to be tightened. Spokes also need to be tightened and fixed firmly to the rims as part of regular bicycle maintenance. The spokes transmit pressure, so if they're damaged they must be replaced immediately.

### **Handlebars;**

Similar to the steering wheel of a car, the handlebar is a key component in maneuvering the bicycle. A handlebar needs to be adjusted to produce the best results. Adjust the height so that you can comfortably hold the handlebar when seated. The handlebar should be properly aligned with the front wheel, to accommodate both quick swerves and smooth changes in either direction. A properly adjusted front fork is equally important. The front fork stabilizes the handlebar and should be securely fastened to the handlebar post. Also, be sure that your bicycle maintenance regime includes checking that the pedals are tightly secured.

### **Brakes;**

The single most important part of the bicycle for rider safety is the brake assembly. Check the brakes by squeezing them and rolling the bike ahead. If the brakes work properly, the wheels will not roll and the brake pads will stay squarely on the rims without touching the tires. If the brake levers touch the handlebars when pressed, it means the brake cables are loose. Tighten them and check for wear. If the brake cables are frayed, have them replaced.

## Chain;

Proper bicycle maintenance includes regular lubrication of the chain, to produce smooth and swift movement. Use a de-greaser to remove accumulated dirt on the grease. Remember to put fresh grease on to replace the dirty grease that has been removed. Keeping your chain clean and well lubricated will keep it from getting stuck or jumping the gear teeth.

Keeping your bicycle in prime riding condition doesn't take a lot of tools or a great deal of technical knowledge. Bicycle maintenance is a simple task that takes only a little time and effort. Keep your bike fit and it will last many years keeping you fit.



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## Why Disc Brakes For Mountain Bikes

A mountain bike is considered as being a bicycle that is designed specifically for mountain biking, either on dirt trails or on other unpaved environments. Mountain bikes are different from regular bikes in a number of ways. For one they have wide and knobby tires for extra traction and shock absorption.

As well, most mountain bikes are fitted with bar ends on the handlebars, however with the increase in the popularity of riser handlebars, fewer riders now tend to use bar end extensions.

There are basically four different classifications of mountain bikes, which are: fully rigid, which is when the frame has a rigid fork and fixed rear with no suspension; hard tail, which is a frame with no rear suspension, and these bikes are usually used with front suspension; soft tail, which is a frame with a small amount of rear suspension, but activated by the flex of the frame instead of by the pivots; dual or full suspension, which is a front suspension fork and rear suspension with a rear shock and linkage that makes the rear wheel move on pivots.

There are many key components on the typical mountain bike, with one of the most critical of all being the mountain bike disk brakes. Mountain bike disk brakes are featured on most new mountain bike models, and they offer much improved stopping power over the previously used rim brakes.

Mountain bike disk brakes also work much better under adverse conditions, because they are located at the center of the wheel, unlike rim brakes, and therefore they remain drier and cleaner than other rims. Although there are many advantages to mountain bike disk brakes, there are some disadvantages as well, such as the fact that they weigh more and are often more expensive as well. Maintenance on these particular brakes also tends to be more difficult and costly, and this is particularly so with hydraulic disk brakes, which work by moving brake fluid through a hose or line to squeeze the pads together.

You always need to make sure that your brakes are in as proper working condition as possible, and so this means that you need to take your bike itself in to get a full inspection monthly, if not more. This will not only ensure that your brakes and the rest of the parts on your bike last as long as they possibly can, but more importantly that you can feel safe riding on a bike that you know is safe and secure and which will be able to properly handle those rugged and steep hills.

## How To Use The Chain Tool For Your Bike

Once your mountain bike chain becomes damaged, you should immediately replace it with a new one. It is possible however, to repair a broken chain using a chain tool. For this very reason, most mountain bikers travel with a chain tool.

Your chain has three basic components - the metal side plates, the rollers between the side plates, and the rivets, or pins which go through the rollers and help to hold the plates together. These pins allow the rollers to freely turn as the chain moves around the cogs.

If your chain happens to break, you'll need to remove the broken link and replace it with a spare link. To do this, simply reattach the two ends of the broken chain and ride on a shorter chain until you can get it replaced.

To remove a broken link of chain, place it in the chain tool. Now, turn the tool counter clockwise until the rivet pin of the chain tool touches the chain rivet. Continue to turn the tool until the pin pushes out of the roller. Be very careful, as you want to stop turning when the pin is right at the edge of the roller, before it moves through the outer side plate.

Now, turn the tool in the other direction, and back it out of the roller. Set the tool to the side, then work the chain very gently from side to side and extract the inner side plates and roller.

Now is the time to re-route the chain through the bike. You may want to have a chain retaining tool or some to help you hold the chain in the right spot as you route and repair it.

Now that the broken link has been removed and you've re-routed the chain, you're ready to insert a new link or simply connect the links that were beside the broken one. The process here is the same - align the two ends so that the link with the inner side plates will fit inside the link with the pin and outer side plates. Now, use the chain tool to push the pin inward until it's positioned evenly between the side plates.

The easiest way to learn how to do this or feel comfortable doing it is to have someone show you, then actually practice with a chain and a chain tool. You'll have no trouble at all making a temporary repair in a mountain bike chain once you've seen it done by a professional and practised it yourself a few times.

## Maintaining Your Bike Chain

Proper bicycle chain maintenance will allow you to keep your bike in tip-top condition for riding. Learning how to take care of your chain can save you time and energy.

A bicycle chain is known for failing at the worst time. This problem of a jumpy or jerky chain can be removed entirely, though, if you simply do some chain maintenance on it regularly. This means that you check your chain at least two times per month or after you ride it about 10 hours if you ride quite a bit. You also want to be sure to do a chain check if you have been riding in bad weather.

You should replace your chain if it is rusted, tight, worn out, or you have ridden more than 1000 miles on it. A new chain with 24 links should measure 12 inches and if it is too long even by 1/16 of an inch, then you want to replace it so that it does not damage the chain ring or sprocket. If you are replacing the chain rings or sprocket, then you need to go ahead and replace the chain so that you do not damage the new chain rings and sprocket.

The metal parts of the chain do not really stretch, but the chain does get longer because of the sleeves and pins wear and tear. Lubricating the chain regularly will help the chain to last longer. If you want to lubricate correctly, then you will want to put just a lubricant drop into each chain pin. This may take you a little time, but it will be well worth it when you increase the life of your chain.

Leave the lubricant on the chain for about 15 minutes and then wipe the excess off with a clean cloth. This will help to keep the chain from catching dirt and grime while riding. It will also keep your chain in tip-top condition.

If you need to clean your bicycle chain, then you can use a degreaser or dish soap. This is a great way to remove lubricant, grime, and grease to help your chain to work better. After you clean it, remember to lubricate it again. You should put the cleaner on the centre of the cleaning cloth or sponge and then place it around the chain. By back-peddalling, you should clean the chain sufficiently. Make sure that you rinse the rag each turn until you do not get any more dirt on it.

Leave the chain on the bicycle when you are cleaning it to keep it from becoming weaker. While you are getting the chain clean, then you can inspect it for any links that may be too tight. A tight chain can cause the chain to jump and jerk. If you find a link that is tight, then you can loosen it by flexing it between two points that are located at about five links away from the tight link. If you cannot loosen it, then you will have to replace the chain. Keeping your bike chain lubricated and clean will help it to last much longer and work much better.



If your chain seems to be making some noise and cleaning does not stop the noise, then you will have to replace it. If pedalling becomes difficult, then it will be time for a chain change as well. By paying attention to detail and maintenance, then you will have a bike chain that you can use for a long time.



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## **The Necessity Of Maintaining Your bike Chain**

The chain is the crucial element of a bicycle - if it breaks, you aren't going anywhere. So proper maintenance is essential.

Of all the components on your bike, the chain is the most important.  
No chain....no go!

Proper chain maintenance will extend the life of your chain - although any chain should be replaced after you've put 1000 miles on it. Don't use a chain any longer that necessary - if its rusted or stretched, it's time to get a new chain.

A bike chain is put together from hundreds of precision-machined parts, consisting of pins, plates and rollers. If it gets full of gunk it will negatively impact your biking experience, and not do your cogs much good either.

The easiest way to take care of the chain is simply to keep it lubricated. Of course - too much of anything is a bad thing. You want the chain lubricated, but the lubrication itself does attract grit, so you don't want to use too much of it.

If you've ridden your bike through a trail full of mud, you'll want to clean it as soon as you return home.

### **Cleaning a chain;**

It's a hassle to take the chain off your bike, but you can certainly do it if you want to. However, in most cases it works just to clean it while its still on the bike. Simply spray degreaser (which you can get at your local bike shop) onto the chain, the derailleur, the cogs and the chain ring. Let the degreaser do its thing for about 20 minutes - then use a rag or stiff-bristle brush to clean off the gunk. Then, simply hose it down. Then, dry it. Then, lube the chain.

### **Lubrication;**

Wipe and lubricate your chain before every ride - it's that simple. Lubrications are made from various ingredients - there are wax-based lubes and there are wet lubes. It's a good idea to keep a notebook in which you record which lube you use and how long your chain lasts. In this way you'll find out which lube works best for your bike and your type of riding.

### **Chain Suck**

Ever experienced this? This happens when the chain doesn't release from the bottom of the chain-ring and pulls up instead - rather than running straight to the lower rear

derailleur. Don't blame this on the front derailleur - it's caused by a worn chain.

### **Chain wear indicator**

The rule of thumb is to replace a chain after you've put a thousand miles on it, but if you don't have an odometer on your bike and don't keep track of how many miles you ride, what can you do? Simple. Purchase a chain wear indicator, and use it on a week-to-week basis. You want to replace the chain as soon as it "goes out of spec" because if you don't, it will wear down the cogs on the drive train and you'll have to replace that as well, as the new chain you eventually do get probably won't fit.



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## Why Bike Maintenance Is Key

When it comes to the subject of mountain bike maintenance, there are quite a few things that you need to take into consideration. Although the specific mountain bike maintenance that you will have to conduct will vary, depending on the particular type of bike that you have, there are a few basics which you will have to remember regardless.

There are a few things that you should always remember to do in order to keep your mountain bike running smoothly, for instance maintaining your bike chain. Because your bike chain is constantly exposed to dirt and stress, it is one of the parts of your bike that gets the most wear. You want to give it a check-up at the start of every season so that you can ensure it is clean and working smoothly. The tools you will need are a pair of needle nose pliers, shallow pan, small stiff brush and chalk. You will also need kerosene, motor oil, rags, and replacement master link bicycle chain.

All you need to do is remove the chain from the bicycle, and to open the master link you need to pull out the retaining clip with your needle nose pliers, and then remove the side plate. You want to pull the link out of the chain in order to release the ends, and align a chain rivet extractor with its screw pin over a rivet, then tighten the screw of the extractor just enough to be able to push the rivet through the center of the chain, but make sure to leave it hanging from the far side, and the chain will separate as the rivet is loosened.

As well for mountain bike maintenance you want to make sure that you know how to fix a flat tire. It is really a simple task, and all you need is a patch kit or spare tire, tire levers, a bicycle pump, and some effort. First you want to remove the old tire, and then take a look to see what actually caused the flat, because you may be able to save that tire. Then you just use the same screws that you took off with the first tire and use them to connect the new tire.

By making yourself informed and knowledgeable on general mountain bike maintenance, you will not only be ensuring your own safety and making mountain biking more convenient on yourself overall, but as well will be saving yourself a great deal of money.

You definitely do not want to go mountain biking far in the wilderness and not know how to fix your bike if something happens to it, and so making sure that you know at least the basics before heading out is truly crucial.

## Why A Mountain Bike?

A mountain bike is a bicycle specifically designed to withstand the toughness and roughness of a cross country ride. Compared to road bikes and BMX bikes, these mountain bikes usually have broader frames and tires to accommodate the rough road and terrain. These bikes usually have either front or rear suspension, depending on the preference of the rider. In some cases, both ends have suspensions. These are for the comfort of the rider while he is jostled as he traverses the rough road.

The broader and more knobby tires of the mountain bike are called knobbies because of the bumps and protrusions on them. These bumps or knobs are very efficient in “gripping” the rough terrain and maintaining their hold on the rough road. The smoother tires of road bikes cannot go up a rough road since these will just skid on it.

The different types of mountain bikes are usually categorized depending on their suspension. A full rigid mountain bike is one that has no suspension at all. Instead of the usual front suspension, it has a fixed fork very similar to those of road bikes. A hard tail mountain bike is one that does have front suspension and does not have any rear ones. Some bikers prefer these kinds of set up since sometimes rear suspension can make the rider exert more effort because of the flex it gives.

A soft tail mountain bike is the kind with rear suspension but these are activated by the movement of the frame itself and not by the pivots. The rear suspension of these kinds of bikes is not as pronounced as those in the full suspension category. A full suspension mountain bike has suspension in both ends, the front and the rear. This is a pretty comfortable bike to ride in rough road because the bike literally cushions you, at least most of the time.

The advantage of using a mountain bike is that you are physically fit and can go any time to visit the great outdoors. It gives a great cardiovascular work out for the heart and burns a lot of calories also. One thing you must remember when you are out biking is to always wear a helmet. The helmet has saved lots of lives already and it just might save your own. Helmets can withstand a pretty severe crash. Even if biking only in the streets near your home, always wear a helmet.

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## **A Spring Tune-up For Your Bike**

For those of us who put our bikes away for the winter, the time has come to dust them off and get ready to ride. When bringing a bike out of storage, a mini tune-up is necessary. Pay special attention to the following four areas: chain, derailleur components, brakes, and wheels.

### **\*\*Chain\*\***

If you have been using an oil-based lubricant, consider switching to a wax-based product. The only advantage to an oil-based lubricant is that it needs to be applied less frequently, but in every other way, wax-based is superior. For instance, oil collects trail dust and other things abrasive to the chain, whereas wax sheds abrasives. A recommended wax-based lube is White Lightning.

If you've been using oil-based chain lube, whether you want to switch to wax or not, you should remove the chain and clean it with a solvent to degrease it before adding fresh lubricant. Depending on your typical riding conditions, using a solvent to degrease the chain needs to be done once a year at a minimum.

### **\*\*Derailleur Components\*\***

Lubricate the pivot points using a good petroleum-based lube. I use Tri-Flow. Next, lubricate and adjust the derailleur cables, which might have stretched over the winter. Adjust so that shifting is crisp.

### **\*\*Brakes\*\***

Again, lubricate the cables. Use either petroleum- or wax-based lube depending on how dusty the expected typical riding conditions will be. Adjust the cables, which might also have stretched over the winter.

Check the pads: is there plenty of rubber; do the pads hit the rims evenly? If using fluid-actuated disc brakes, check the brake fluid level in the reservoir.

### **\*\*Wheels\*\***

Spin the wheel slowly checking for true. The wheel should not wobble at all. If it wobbles a little bit and you have the tools and skill, you can make minor adjustments using a spoke wrench. But if there is substantial wobbling, take the wheel to a shop

and have a professional true the wheel.

Check tire pressure, which is bound to be low after a winter of storage. Inflate to the manufacturers recommendations that are stamped on the tire.

Now give the bike a once-over. Is the seat adjustment still a good fit? Is there excess play or tightness in the bearings of the wheels, crank, pedals, and headset? Also, for full-suspension bikes, check the suspension joints.

From this once-over, you will be able to determine whether it is time for a major tune-up. This could range from a few adjustments to cleaning and/or replacement of some parts. Opinions differ on how often a major tune-up is needed. It depends on how much you ride, and how much maintenance you perform yourself.

Whether you do the major tune-up yourself or take the bike to a reputable bicycle shop, every now and then the following maintenance is necessary for optimal performance and safety: repacking bearings and adjusting wheel axles, headset, crank-set and pedals; replacing cables; truing the wheels; making overall adjustments, such as to the derailleur and brakes.



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## Why You Should Repair Your Mountain Bike ASAP

It would seem that bikes that can cost upwards of two or three thousand dollars would include more information about mountain bike repair than a few pages in booklet form. Regardless of this lack of information, every rider needs to become familiar with a few of the basic needs of mountain bike repair simply to maintain their bike in good working order. After all, a wheel falling off during a downhill run can have devastating effects on the rider as well as the bike.

One of the first things everyone needs to know about mountain bikes is how to keep them clean. This involves not only the tires and handlebar grips, but also the wheels to prevent erosion and the chain to help detect potential breaks. To minimize the need for mountain bike repair, preventive maintenance can save time and money along the trail, and knowing how to perform a few simple repair procedures can get you back on the trail in a hurry.

Having a chain tool in the toolbox can be helpful if a link needs to be replaced and knowing what lubrication works best under the conditions in which you ride, also helps make chain breaks less frequent. One of the most common mountain bike repair procedures is fixing a flat tire. With mountain bikes, especially those with several gears, adjustments to the chain ring are usually required after the back wheel has removed for tire repair and then replaced.

While few parts on any bike will last forever, especially under the conditions in which most mountain bikes are ridden, simple steps can prevent the need for extensive mountain bike repair procedures. Like oil in a car's engine can prevent the need for a new engine, keeping a bike's brake cables lubricated can prevent them from snapping. When the brakes are needed and the cable is rusty and frayed, it can cause them to fail. This can lead to not only needing more repairs on the bike, but can also result in personal injury to the rider.

Listening to the bike, more accurately the noises that may be heard can often offer hints of needed mountain bike repair. A slight rubbing noise may be the result of the tire hitting a brake pad, or a steady sliding noise may indicate problems with the rotor on disc brakes. A simple adjustment may cure these issues before more extensive mountain bike repair becomes necessary.



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