



Testing Your Brakes

Your brakes are one of the most important elements of your bicycle. Keep them well serviced and they will always perform at their best.

1. Apply the brake being tested. It should apply smoothly and lock the wheel when full pressure is applied. If this is not the case adjust the distance between the friction material and the rim until you have a smooth, positive braking action. When applied the lever should not come all the way back to the handlebar or so far back that it can contact with your fingers on the handlebar.
2. Check the brake cables. They should be free of dirt and corrosion and should not be frayed. If they are heavily corroded or frayed they should be replaced.
3. Check the brake pads to ensure they are not worn below the markers. If they are then they must be replaced. They should be wearing evenly along their length. If not, adjust them so that they are seated evenly along the rim of the wheel (you may need to cut away the unworn part to allow an even contact).
4. Apply grease to the brake pivots being careful not to get any on the friction material, rim or brake disc (if fitted).
5. If hydraulic disc brakes are fitted the brake fluid level should be checked and topped up if necessary. Spongy or weak hydraulic disc brakes may be due to air bubbles in the brake lines. If this occurs the system should be bled and refilled.



Checking Your Tyres

Your tyres are your only point of contact with the road. They must be at the correct pressure and have appropriate tread to provide you with maximum grip.

1. Make sure you know what pressure your tyres should be at.
2. Check the current pressures with a pressure gauge to see if more or less pressure is required.
3. Remove the dust cap and attach your pump to the valve.
4. Brace your hand, holding the pump, against the spokes of the wheel to prevent jerking the valve and causing damage to it as you pump.
5. Pump the tyre up to the correct pressure.
6. Check the pressure with a pressure gauge to see that you have reached the correct pressure.
7. Re-install the dust cap to prevent dirt entering the valve.
8. Check the tread of the tyre. It should not be too thin at any point and should not have any splits in the rubber. Remove any stones from the tread as they may cause damage to the tyre.
9. Check the side walls of the tyre for splits or cracks in the rubber.



Repairing A Puncture

Punctures can be inconvenient and usually occur at the most inopportune times but following these instructions should get you back on the road in no time.

1. Visibly check the outside of the tyre to see what has caused the puncture. Do not run your hands over the tyre as small shards of glass or metal embedded in the tyre could cut your hands. Remove any offending sharp objects from the tyre carefully before attempting to repair the inner tube.
2. If there are no visible causes of the puncture check the valve to see that it isn't leaking. This can be done by filling a small cup or aerosol lid with water and immersing the valve in it. Escaping bubbles indicate a faulty valve. Usually a faulty valve necessitates the replacement of the inner tube.
3. Loosen the wheel nuts and remove the wheel. Fully deflate the tyre if it is not completely flat.
4. Starting from the area of tyre furthest away from the valve push the edge of the tyre off the rim and put two tyre levers into the gap. While holding one in place carefully run the other around the edge of the tyre pulling it off the rim all the way around. Take care not to scratch the rim or damage the inner tube.
5. Check the inside of the tyre and remove any offending sharp objects taking the same care as when you checked the outside of the tyre.
6. With one edge of the tyre off you can get access to the inner tube. Carefully remove the valve from the hole in the frame and take the inner off the wheel.
7. Inflate the inner with some air and immerse the tyre, piece at a time, into a basin of water. Watch for bubbles escaping and mark the puncture with a wax crayon. Continue checking all the way round the tyre to be sure you don't have more than one puncture.
8. Dry the inner tube at the point of the puncture and use chalk dust to soak up any last moisture. Roughen the area with sandpaper and apply a puncture repair patch.
9. Inflate the inner with some air and check that no air is escaping from the repaired area by immersing, as before, in a basin of water.
10. Deflate and refit the inner tube, valve first, onto the wheel. Make sure it isn't twisted.
11. Pull the tyre back over the inner tube and onto the rim taking care not to trap the inner between the tyre and the rim. If possible do this without the tyre levers to prevent damage to the inner or rim.
12. Pump the tyre back up to full pressure. Ride carefully for a time to ensure the puncture repair has been successful.



Maintaining Your Drive Chain

Your drive chain is vital for the operation of your bicycle. To keep your bicycle operating at its best you should clean and lubricate your chain on a regular basis.

1. Before any chain maintenance move the chain to the gearing that provides the least tension on the chain. This is typically the middle cog front and rear.
2. Degrease the chain by spraying on a degreasant and brushing with a small, soft bristled brush (an old toothbrush is good).
3. Degrease the front and rear sprockets in the same way.
4. Check that there is no damage to any of the links in the chain. If any damage is evident the chain should be replaced. Look at the sprockets front and rear. If the teeth of the sprockets are becoming pointed rather than having flat tops they should be replaced together with the chain.
5. Apply a good quality liquid chain lube to the chain and sprockets and remove any excess with a cloth. Avoid chain lube getting on brake components.



Cleaning Your Bicycle

1. Fill a bucket with warm water and hose down your bicycle with cold water to loosen the dirt.
2. Spray a bicycle cleaner onto your bicycle paying particular attention to areas where dirt builds up (underside of mudguards, crank, wheels etc.).
3. Using a soft bristled brush clean off the dirt starting from the top of the bicycle and working to the bottom but leaving the chain and sprockets until last.
4. Using a degreasant clean the chain and sprockets.
5. Dry the bicycle with chamois leather and apply a protective silicon based polish taking care not to contaminate the braking system.
6. Apply chain lube to the chain and sprockets taking care not to contaminate the braking system.
7. Apply grease to the brake pivots taking care not to contaminate the braking system.
8. A water dispersal spray can be applied to brake and gear cables to prevent corrosion.

