

Basic Bicycle Maintenance Tips

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"Bicycles are the most elegant and efficient machines ever developed for the transport of human beings". A bike's efficiency is owed primarily to the pneumatic tire and the ball bearing, however the contribution of many other factors adds up to the efficiency that makes gliding through the atmosphere on a bicycle even more enjoyable.

1. Air your tires!!! The air pressure in a bike's tires bleeds down naturally, check pressure often and use a *floor pump* for regular inflation. *Frame mounted pumps* are for on-road repairs only. Pump strokes **MUST** go all the way down each time to be effective. Use shorter upstrokes to finish the inflation of high pressure tires with ease.
2. Keep your chain lubed and wiped completely clean.
3. Make sure the rear derailleur's "pulleys" are lubricated properly.
4. Make sure hub bearings are well greased and smoothly adjusted.
5. Keep cables lubricated, especially after wet riding.
6. Check brake pads for excessive wear and rubbing (pads are worn out when grooves disappear).
7. Do not wash your bike, instead, clean the frame with furniture polish, and the rims with "409".
8. Make sure that wheels are fastened firmly and become familiar with "quick release" operation.
9. Have crank bearings (bottom bracket) and fork bearings (headset) checked periodically.
10. Lubricate all derailleur and brake pivot points regularly.
11. Check critical fasteners at least once per season, and after every service.
12. Inspect rims for cracks or damage at least every 6 months.
13. Inspect frame and forks for cracks or damage with every cleaning.
14. Inspect tires for cuts (larger than 1/8") and wear before every ride.
15. Remember, most shifting problems can be solved by turning the cable "Adjusting Barrel" counter-clockwise 1/2 turn at a time until the desired result - i.e. quick/crisp shifting - is obtained.

It is a good idea to have your bike serviced professionally at least once per year. The trained eyes and hands of experienced mechanics are often able to detect areas of concern well before the onset of an unpleasant experience. And, well, we just like seeing you.

Thanks, and happy cycling,

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