

Easy Bike Maintenance Tips For The Non-Technical Person

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MANSFIELD, OH: Many people keep a bike stored in their garage or basement and jump on it when the spirit moves them. It's only when problems arise and the bike is clearly not functioning that they seek the help of a skilled bike mechanic.



You can avoid minor problems by performing a few periodic maintenance tasks that will help to keep your bike ready whenever you are.

Cleaning Your Bike Chain

If you're like most people, you ride your bike without thinking about the dirt and debris it collects along the roads and bike paths. The chain of your bike can become caked with this road dirt that, over time, can impede the bike's performance and ultimately lead to failure. Keep a few rags in the garage or other bike storage area to give the chain a quick once-over each time you ride your bike. This measure will help to prevent caking of debris that leads to poor performance and mechanical problems. At the end of each biking season, use WD40 or a good bike chain cleaner to wipe off the entire chain mechanism. Then, use an old toothbrush to clean between the links. Work along the entire length of the chain. Finish by wiping the chain clean once more with a clean cloth.

Lubricating Moving Parts

You don't have to have technical knowledge about how a bike works to do a thorough lubrication of the moving parts. Simply observe the bike in action. Notice the pivot points on the braking system. These may become grimy and rusted. Clean thoroughly with WD40, wipe dry and apply a good quality bike lubricant, such as Boeshield T-9 or White Lightning Clean Ride. Avoid getting lubricant on the brake pads. Apply the lubricant to the front derailleur and back

derailleur. These are the two mechanisms that make the chain shift to different chain rings when you shift gears. Turn the pedals while you shift the gears to see how this mechanism operates. Put a small amount of oil in the hole of the derailleur. Spread the lubricant onto each gear by shifting the gears. Next, place a tiny amount on the shifter arm and brake arms to keep them functioning smoothly. Finally, apply a bit of lubricant to the pedals where they meet the crank arm. Wipe off excess lubricants from all parts.

Brake Inspection

Check the brake pads to ensure that they still have some groove on the pads for effective braking. If not, you can try replacing the pads yourself or take it to a bike mechanic for replacement. When in doubt about the capability of your brakes, take it for repair. The brakes are a safety feature you depend on every minute of your ride.

Tire Pressure

Before any bike trip, no matter how short, check your tire pressure and add additional air, if necessary. On longer trips, you may wish to carry a small-sized bike pump to ensure that unexpected leaks do not impede your journey.

Overall Assessment

Take the bike for a short ride to assess the overall performance. If you detect any rubbing noises, looseness of the chain or problems with braking, take the bike to an experience mechanic for a check-up and repair.

Finding A Good Bike Mechanic

Most people simply take their bikes to the shop where they bought it, but this does not always work out well. Another option is to find local people who work on bikes in their spare time. These biking hobbyists often advertise at the local hardware store or in the local newspaper. This method often works out well because these people generally love bicycles, enjoy riding and have educated themselves extensively on many types of bikes and their workings. Another way to find a good mechanic is to ask bikers that you encounter on your rides. You can always run into one or two cyclists that obviously take their hobby very seriously. Inquire if they do repairs or know someone who does.

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