



# GET RIDE READY

## 10 POINT SAFETY CHECK

- ✓ TYRE CONDITION AND TREAD DEPTH
- ✓ TYRE PRESSURE
- ✓ LIGHTS - FRONT AND REAR
- ✓ BRAKES - FRONT AND REAR
- ✓ BRAKE AND CLUTCH FLUID LEVELS
- ✓ OIL LEVEL
- ✓ DRIVETRAIN CONDITION
- ✓ CABLES AND CONTROLS
- ✓ SUSPENSION OPERATION
- ✓ STEERING OPERATION



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# BIKE MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

## ✓ TYRE CONDITION AND TREAD DEPTH

The legal minimum tread depth is 1.5mm over at least 75% of the road-contact surface of the tyre. Many modern tyres have a wear indicator, which is a thin bit of rubber that projects from the bottom of the tread 'valley'. If that is flush with the surface of the tyre, that's your legal minimum. Otherwise, measure using a tread gauge or a precision steel ruler. Bear in mind, that 'legal minimum' is not optimal for wet roads and the thinner tyres puncture more easily. Other things to check are the side walls for any cracking, crazing or splits, and, if you've left the bike on its tyres for winter, are they still round?

## ✓ TYRE PRESSURES

Have you established the pressures that work best for you, your suspension set-up and the tyres you're using? No? Then check the factory recommendations in your manual or find them online. Then check the tyres with a gauge. Using the one at the servo is better than nothing but an accurate gauge is something every rider should own.

## ✓ LIGHTS, FRONT & REAR

Dipped beam, full beam, rear light, brake light operation (front and rear brake separately) plus all four indicators.

## ✓ BRAKES, FRONT AND REAR

Look over the brake discs for any rust, pitting or damage. Look at the brake pads inside the calipers: do they have plenty of 'meat' left? Squeeze the pedal and lever to check for operation and pressure. Sit on the bike, roll it forward and check for operation. Finally, take it for a short test ride, make sure the brakes are operating 100%, then look over the fluid levels and hoses to check for any cracks or leaks.

## ✓ BRAKE AND CLUTCH FLUID LEVELS

Check the fluid levels in all master cylinders. If they've gone down while the bike has been sitting, be suspicious. Give the master cylinders a visual inspection for any weeping or leaks, then follow the brake hoses all the way down the calipers looking for damage or seepage. If you do have to top up the fluid levels, use high quality fluid from a sealed (preferably new) container. Brake fluid is highly damaging to paintwork, so ensure your tank and any other painted areas are protected.

## ✓ OIL LEVEL

Ensure the bike is positioned bolt upright, not on its side stand: use a centre stand, paddock stand or get a mate to help. Many bikes have a sight glass, others use a dip stick. If you do need to top up the oil, make sure you use the recommended grade for your bike. Add oil gradually, a little at a time, then check: too much oil in an engine can be catastrophically damaging. If you overfill you'll need to drain some out via the sump plug (use a new gasket and retighten with a torque wrench to the correct setting).

## ✓ DRIVETRAIN CONDITION

Get the back wheel off the ground so you can rotate it by hand. Turn the wheel with one hand so you can check the chain, section by section. Look for tight spots or links that are seized. If you do find a problem area, it may free up with a clean and lube. But if it's in any way stubborn you'll need to replace the chain. Check the teeth on the rear sprocket: if they're hooked or worn to a point it's time to replace it. And if the back is worn, the front is likely to be too. Often there's an inspection cover that can be removed with a few screws to let you check the front sprocket. After inspection, clean the chain with proprietary chain cleaner and a plastic bristle brush then lube thoroughly, spraying the chain lube between all the moving surfaces from the inside of the chain (not the outside, which will mostly just fling off). If you have shaft drive, lucky you. All that's needed is a quick check for leaks and roll the bike forward in neutral to check the shaft rotates freely.

## ✓ CABLES AND CONTROL

Look over the hand and foot levers and make sure nothing's loose. Squeeze the levers and make sure they're free. If you have a cable clutch, make sure the cable action is smooth and check the top and bottom of the cable to ensure there's no fraying or rust: otherwise, it's replacement time.

## ✓ SUSPENSION OPERATION

Sit on the bike and bounce the rear shock. It should compress smoothly then release smoothly, in one movement. It should not bounce back up so hard that it hits you in the butt, which would indicate faulty rebound damping, nor go back into a second stroke, which indicates insufficient compression damping. If either happens, check the shock(s) for weeping: a leak will mean a rebuild or replacement. For the front, first remove any dust or dirt on the fork legs. Hold the front brake down and push down on the bars. Again, the suspension should compress then release in one smooth, damped movement: not stick, kick up or go into a second movement. Check the front fork legs for oil leaks, which would require new seals. Any difference in damping from how it was when you put the bike away indicates a potential problem, not something you should 'adjust out'. So get it looked at.

## ✓ STEERING OPERATION

Ideally, you need to get the front wheel off the ground to check this. Turn the bars from side to side: there should be no resistance, sticking or noise from the head bearings. Holding the ends of the forks near the wheel spindle, try to move them forwards and backwards. There should be no discernible movement at the steering head. If there is, the bearings will need looking at by a mechanic: some are adjustable, others will need replacing.

Source: [Rideforever.co.nz](http://Rideforever.co.nz)