

# MAINTENANCE & SERVICING



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TRACK & TRAIL  
BIKING AND BEYOND

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A clean, well maintained bike is a pleasure to ride. Regular cleaning and maintenance will influence how long components last and help them function optimally. Problems or potential failures can be discovered early and prevented through regular checks.

## Cleaning

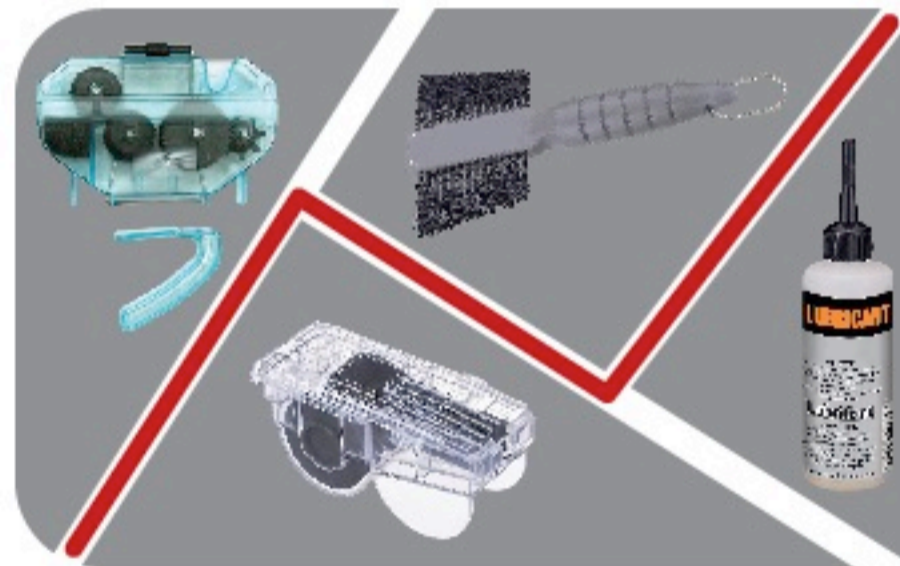
Cleaning your bike after every ride is not always practical or possible. Assuming regular use, a weekly clean after every mucky ride, ensures that dirt and grime never build up. It will take far less time and effort if done regularly.

Regardless of what kind of bike you have, the principles remain the same. The majority of your efforts should be focussed on the drive chain, particularly if you are short on time. It's better to do a spotless job on cleaning just the chain, cassette, chainrings and rear derailleur (jockey wheels) and leave the rest of the bike a bit dirty, than do a quick 'half job' on the whole thing.

Never re-lubricate the chain while it is still dirty. The dirt and grit on the chain will simply combine with the lubricant and leave you with a black, filthy mess, which forms an abrasive paste that wears away your chain and sprockets at an alarming rate.

Having the correct tools for the job will make it much simpler and the job can be done in a fraction of the time. Invest in a good set of

brushes. A wide, soft brush can be used for getting rid of the majority of road muck from the larger surface areas. A stiffer brush is good for working around rims and tyres and smaller brushes, for getting into the gaps between components and frame. Some brushes are specifically shaped to get into the hard to reach places, such as the tiny gaps between the sprockets on the cassette. Make sure brushes are of good quality and not metallic as it could scratch your bike.



Using a cleaning product to help break down the grime will make this part of the job easier. Several relatively inexpensive products are available in simple-to-use trigger sprays that are safe to use on all parts of the bike.

Cleaning the chain itself can be a major chore unless you invest in a chain cleaner and some degreaser. A chain cleaner is a hand held device that fits onto the chain. By back pedalling, the chain is passed through a small bath of degreaser over a series of stiff brushes that clean the chain on all sides. With a few turns of the



pedal the job is done effortlessly. The muck from the chain will be held within the cleaning device and not flicked all over your frame. Water soluble degreasers can be rinsed off with plain water to remove any residue. Any degreaser left behind on the chain after cleaning will begin to break down any new oil that is applied. It is strongly recommended that products such as white spirit, petrol or paraffin are not used for chain cleaning. 'Bike specific' cleaning products are there to help protect the components of the bike. The use of car cleaning products like wash and wax can cause loss of performance to mountain bike disc brake systems and washing liquid contains powerful cleaning agents that may harm paintwork and some vinyl graphics.

### Post cleaning; lubricating and water dispersal

After cleaning, your attention should be turned to drying and lubing. A water disperser such as GT85 - is used to help drive moisture out of components where it could cause harm. These products are generally aerosols to force it into hard to reach areas. Water dispersers are not recommended as lubricants, but they can be used to protect components by wiping over the exterior surfaces. The lubricant on your chain is its only defence from the elements and helps it to run more smoothly, with no irritating squeaks! Chain lube comes in many different forms. Modern oils are synthetic and often Teflon based, they are often referred to as a dry lube as they are not sticky to the touch. This stops the chain from picking up grit. It also means that the



adhesion to the chain is not so good in wet conditions. Wax based lubes fall into a similar category. Dry to the touch and clean, but not as resistant to water wash out. When deciding on the correct type of oil to use, a number of factors should be considered, mainly the type of bike, the time of year and the conditions in which the bike is predominantly used. For example, road bikes do not require 'heavy' oils even in the worst conditions and the cleaner wax or Teflon based 'dryer' formulas are sufficient all year round. A mountain biker will need to choose a different type of oil to cope with mud, but will need to consider whether the oil will 'fling' which can cause problems with modern disc brake systems. Very little oil goes a long way on a drive train as it is constantly turning and the oil will transfer to each of the components. Just by applying fresh oil to a cleaned chain the life of your components can be extended.



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## General Maintenance

Just like your car, certain components on a bicycle are prone to everyday wear and tear that needs to be changed frequently. Cables will need to be changed to ensure smooth operation when changing gears and braking. Brake pads and tyres will wear out and chains, no matter how well looked after, will only last so many miles. Some of this can be done at home – with the right tools and know-how, but if you are in any doubt, get your bike serviced by the experts. Poorly fitted components are a major cause of costly damage to your bike that put your safety at risk. An understanding of the basics of bike maintenance is an invaluable skill for any cyclist. A number of books are available that offer a great introduction to the fundamentals combined with a quality tool kit. These items will prove to be a valuable investment.

## 'On the bike' tool checklist

Being self-sufficient, especially when you are miles from civilisation can be the difference between a long walk and a short ride. Here is a list of essential tools that every cyclist should take with them no matter how short their journey is:



## Multi-tool

A range of Allen keys and screwdrivers



## Tyre levers

To remove tyres from the rim to fix punctures



## Mini pump

Many come with frame-fitting brackets



## Spare tube

To quickly swap over in the event of a puncture



## Patch kit

To repair punctures



## Professional servicing

There will be times when the work must be carried out by a fully qualified technician who has specialised knowledge and access to specific tools. There is only so much you can do at home. For best performance and safety, seek a specialist's advice on set up and repair.

Dealer Stamp