



Spring Bike Checkup

Cleaning

It is important to start with a clean bike. Keeping your bike clean will extend the life of your components. As you clean the bike take the time to inspect everything. Look for cracks or other signs of wear that could cause future breakdowns or part failures. Clean the chain, chainrings, cassette, derailleurs, etc. with a biodegradable cleaner. Simple green works great for this. Use an old tooth brush and clean everything. Clean the pedals, the brakes, tires, rims, and the frame. Remove the seatpost from the frame and wipe off any dirt. Wipe the inside of the frame where the seatpost slides into. Apply a very small amount of good grease to the post and reinstall.

Brake System

Check the brake pads. Unfasten the brake cable and look at the brake pads closely. The pads should be wearing evenly. If you have a ridge in the pads then your brakes may need to be adjusted. If the pads are worn or not smooth then get some new pads. Do the pads strike the rim at the same time?

Wheels

Clean Spin the wheels. Do they go around straight or do they wobble? If the wheel is out of true take it to a shop for repair.

Drivetrain

Shift through all the rear gears. Shifting from gear to gear should be smooth. If it skips try adjusting your rear derailleur. If this fails to correct the problem your chain, cogset, and chainrings may be worn. The chain is the first to go. Chains last from 6 months to a year. A good chain only costs \$15-40 and is well worth the investment. Examine your chain closely for side slop and stretch which are signs that your chain is wearing out. If your chain is worn it can prematurely wear on your cogs and rings. In the front try shifting the derailleur. Adjust your front derailleur if needed. Check the front chainrings for excessive wear. Small chainrings wear out much faster your larger ones. Apply some fresh lube of your preference.

Tires

Check tires for splits, cracks, or tears in the sidewall. Check the tread of the tire for excessive wear. Replace the tires if needed. There is nothing worse than having a tire blow out because it needed to be replaced.

Cables

Check cables, ferules, and cable stops for damage. Damaged or binding cables can create shifting and braking problems.

Lube

Apply lubrication to the chain. It should be applied so there is an even coat on the inside and outside of each link and between the pins and rollers. Leave it one for a few minutes, then wipe off the excess lube with a rag. A few drops should be added to the cables at the nipple end. Gore-Tex and other Teflon cables should never be lubricated. All pivot points on the front and rear derailleur should be oiled. Apply a few drops to the brake lever pivots and to the exposed brake cable.