

FFWD



GET READY FOR SPRING

AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO GET YOUR BIKE READY IN SIX STEPS

With spring just around the corner, birds gently whistling and days getting longer it's the perfect time for many cyclists to get their bikes ready for the fresh outdoors.

Whether you rack up miles year-round or mainly click into the pedals in the spring, one thing is certain: a shiny and well-maintained bike provides more comfort, safety and most importantly: that extra bit of fun.

In this blog post you will discover in 6 clear steps how to get your two wheel companion all ready for the new spring season.

Let's get started!

1. A PROPER CLEANING

Why does cleaning pay off?

A clean bike not only looks nicer but also functions better. Dirt can build up causing bearings, chains and derailleurs to wear and make annoying squeaking or creaking noises. Plus while cleaning you'll uncover any (minor) damage on your frame.

What you need;

- » Bucket with water
- » Mild soap (e.g. dish soap) or special bike cleaner
- » Sponge or soft brush
- » A brush or old toothbrush for the small corners
- » Soft cloth(s) to dry off

How to proceed;

- » First well in the soapy water: You dip the sponge or brush into the bucket of suds and thoroughly wipe the frame first and then the rest of the bike. Edges of the saddle and hard-to-reach areas also deserve attention.
- » Brushing: Stubborn dirt on rims, chainring or chainstays should be removed with a soft brush.
- » Cleaning details: With a small brush, gears and derailleurs come to the rescue.
- » Rinse and dry: After soaping and brushing, rinse everything well with clean water and pat dry with a clean cloth.
- » Polishing for the shine: For the real finishing touch, use a polishing cloth to make the frame and parts shine optimally again.



2. INSPECT THE BIKE FOR DAMAGE AND WEAR

Reasons to check for damage;

A bike with hidden damage or worn parts can create dangerous situations. Cracks in the frame, worn out brake pads or broken spokes can spoil the riding fun considerably. By checking in time and replacing worn parts, you will not only cycle more safely, your parts will also last longer.

What to look out for;

- » Frame and fork: Look for cracks, dents or other noticeable signs of damage.
- » Wheels: Spin the wheel and check from above to see if it runs straight along your forks. A “slap” in the wheel may indicate damaged spokes or a misaligned wheel.
- » Play in bearings: Headset, bottom bracket and wheel hubs should not rattle, wobble or creak.
- » Brake and shifting system: Check that all cables move smoothly and have no cracks or kinks.

Did you discover any damage?

If you have the knack for it yourself, you can repair or replace parts yourself. If you doubt your own technical skills, it is wise to hire a (local) bike shop. This way you can be sure that everything will be fixed safely and professionally.

3. LUBRICATE THE ROTATING PARTS

The importance of lubrication;

Friction is the biggest opponent of smooth bike rides. With the right lubricant in the right place, you extend the life of the parts and ride more quietly, smoothly and comfortably.

Which parts deserve attention?

- » Chain: A dry chain squeaks and wears faster. Regular good cleaning and re-lubrication ensures the best results.
- » Derailleurs: The pivot points of front and rear derailleurs and the derailleur wheels require an occasional drop of lubricant.
- » Bearings: Consider headset, bottom bracket and hubs. On many modern bikes, these bearings are sealed (industrial bearings). If these become worn, replacement is often the best option.
- » Brake cables and shift cables: Is everything running smoothly? If not, a drop of oil or silicone spray may help, or the cables should be replaced. Of course, if your bike has hydraulic disc brakes, this does not apply.

Lubrication Tip;

Lubrication with wax: These days, lubrication with wax is hot. Special wax-based lubricant for bike chains works perfectly, making for a smoother and cleaner chain.



4. CHECK TIRE PRESSURE AND TREAD

Why tire pressure is so important;

- » Grip: The right pressure in tires gives more stability, especially when cornering or on wet roads.
- » Comfort: Over-inflated tires cause your bike to bounce more on uneven road surfaces, while over-inflated tires give higher rolling resistance.
- » Prevent punctures: If the pressure is too low, the outer tire can deflect down to the rim on uneven roads, risking a puncture and even damage to the rim.

Check the condition of the tires;

- » Tread: Do you see cracks, scuffs or is the tread almost smooth? This is a sign that a new tire is not a luxury.
- » Sidewalls: Drying out or cracks in the tire sidewall? This could mean the tire needs replacement.

When doing so, pay attention to the recommended tire pressure, which can usually be found on the sidewall of the tire. For road bikes, this is higher (around 4.5-9 bar), while for gravel and mountain bikes, 1.5-3 bar is common. Tubeless riders need to use a lower tire pressure for extra comfort and grip.



5. CHECK THE BRAKES

Safety first!

It should come as no surprise that a set of perfectly functioning brakes is vital. No one wants to find out that braking power falls short during an unexpected situation. Brakes are relatively easy to check, and a thorough check can certainly prevent accidents.

What to look for;

- » Brake pads: Are they in need of replacement? With rim brakes, there is often a wear indicator. Brake pads should also be checked regularly with disc brakes.
- » Brake cable tension: With mechanical brakes, the tension can usually be adjusted with an adjustment bolt or through the brake hubs themselves.
- » Hydraulic brakes: Check that no oil is leaking and that the pressure in the lines is still sufficient. Does the brake squeak or drag? If so, you may need to adjust the caliper or replace brake pads.
- » Distance to the rim or disc: The pads should be neatly aligned so that they do not drag.



6. TAKE A TEST DRIVE

Testing is knowing

After all the polishing, lubrication and inspection, a first ride is the ultimate check to see if everything is working as desired. Such a short test ride doesn't have to be long, but is definitely recommended before you embark on your first long ride of the season.

How best to do a test ride;

- » Pay attention to sounds: Does something rattle, feel too much resistance or sound unusual friction? If so, some adjustment is probably needed.
- » Check for play: Is the handlebars loose, does the bottom bracket feel wobbly or does the wheel vibrate while riding? If so, go back into the workshop to fix the problem.
- » How's the shifting: Go through all the gears. Do the chain and derailleurs run smoothly across all gears?
- » Brake performance: Check if there is enough braking power right away and the brakes dose nicely.

If everything feels right, you can start planning the best bike routes with confidence.

Tip: Check the bike well in advance before events or vacations

Not only at the beginning of the new season is it wise to check your bike thoroughly. Even when a longer bike ride, race or vacation is planned, it is smart to take a good look at the bike. That way, any hidden problems are detected and resolved early.

A good check in advance saves a lot of last-minute stress and potential disappointment if, for example, the brakes turn out not to be properly adjusted or the tires need replacing. By getting your bike in top condition well before departure, you can fully focus on the planned cycling challenge, instead of having to worry about technical defects.

Especially for tubeless riders: check or replace rim tape

More and more cyclists are discovering the benefits of cycling with tubeless tires, but with that comes the need for the right rim tape. As soon as you switch from an inner tube to tubeless (or already ride tubeless), it is smart to check the rim tape sharply.

Special tubeless tape seals the space between rim and tire and prevents annoying leaks at the spoke holes. Wear spots, bubbles or small holes in the tape can cause gradual loss of pressure, which can cause discomfort and unsafe situations on the road. A good, tightly fitted tubeless tape is the foundation of any airtight setup. So make sure it's in tiptop shape before you start racking up miles again



BONUS TIP!

SPOIL YOUR BIKE WITH AN UPGRADE

New wheels: the best upgrade for any bike

Are you ready to give your bike a serious extra boost? Then investing in a new wheelset is a leap of confidence. A set of high carbon wheels provides better aerodynamics, lower weight and more efficient handling. In addition, of course, they also look great.

Also for gravel and mountain bikes, upgrading your wheels provides better performance. Especially in terms of stability and agility, you will experience the difference immediately.

Other clever innovations;

Consider wider tires: More and more road cyclists are switching to slightly wider tires. This gives extra comfort, grip and safety.

Handlebar and saddle upgrade: A good saddle and an ergonomic handlebar to suit your riding position and body will reduce the risk of saddle soreness and hand fatigue.

Smart lighting: In the spring it can still be grey and dark. Good visibility ensures safe rides. Smart lighting systems linked to your bicycle computer detect traffic behind you.

CONCLUSION

Spring is one of the most favorite seasons for many cyclists just after hibernation. The world awakens, nature begins to bloom, and sunlight brightens the landscape. Plenty of motivation to get outside!

The likelihood of enjoyable rides increases considerably if the bike is thoroughly cleaned, inspected and properly adjusted beforehand. With the 6 steps we've discussed, plus a possible bonus upgrade, your beloved two-wheeler will be ready to take on the spring sun in no time.

The 6 more in brief:

1. Proper cleaning: Remove dirt and make your bike shine again.
2. Inspect: Track damage and prevent safety hazards.
3. Lubricate: Keep your chain, derailleurs and bearings running smoothly.
4. Check tire pressure: Ensure perfect grip and optimal comfort.
5. Check brakes: Avoid surprises and keep your rides safe.
6. Test drive: Check that everything works and then enjoy every mile without unpleasant surprises.

Once you perform these steps, you can get back on the road (or the forest trail) with confidence and enjoy the magical spring. Let the sun come out, your bike is ready!

