Follow A Pre-Ride Checklist To Increase Enjoyment, Reduce Problems

Once a week conduct this 30-minute bike inspection, which checks all systems. (Print this list and use it as a checklist to keep track of things as you work.)

1. Wipe down the frame and look for flaking paint that may indicate that a crack has developed. Although frame failure is rare, it can happen. (It's most likely if you crash or ride hard all the time.)
2. Wipe down the rims, to clean residue that affects braking. Scrub with alcohol to remove any black deposits. Closely inspect the rim sides for wear from braking. See deep grooves? Have us check the rim for safety.
3. Spin the wheels. They should be round and true. If they wobble, spokes may have loosened and the wheel should be trued and tensioned.
4. Inflate your tires to the proper pressure (it's usually written on the sidewalls) and inspect them closely for wear and tear. If they're bald or the sidewalls are damaged or cracked, replace the tire(s).
5. Grab the top of each wheel and gently push and pull laterally, feeling for play at the hubs. If you find any, the wheel bearings should be adjusted.
6. Apply the front brake and rock the bike back and forth feeling for play. If there's any play, the headset (steering bearings) needs adjustment.
7. Hold onto the crankarms and push and pull laterally feeling for play in the bottom-bracket bearings. Play indicates adjustment is needed.
8. Check that these key parts are tight by putting a wrench on them and trying to tighten them: crank bolts, chainring bolts, pedals (the left pedal is turned counter-clockwise to tighten), stem bolts, derailleur mounting bolts, derailleur pulley bolts, brake bolts, seat-post bolt, seat bolt.
9. Prep the chain by applying a bike-specific lubricant let it soak in for a few minutes, then wipe off the excess with a rag.
10. If your derailleur cables run beneath the bottom bracket, drop a bit of light oil on the contact areas.
11. Inspect your chainring for broken teeth, but don't be alarmed if you have newer chainrings and some teeth are slightly shorter than others. Chainrings are designed this way because the shorter teeth provide a specific release point where the chain can easily drop from the large ring to the small, improving the shifting.
12. Examine all the cables for rust and fraying, signs that replacement is needed.
13. Make sure your handlebars have end plugs because open-ended bars can hurt you if you crash.
14. If you use clipless pedals, check the hardware on your cleats and the cleats themselves for wear (signs of worn-out cleats can be difficulty getting in and out of your pedals, and cleats that pull out inadvertently during hard pedaling).

Let Us Help

Feel free to ask us if you have any questions regarding inspecting your bike for maintenance and safety. We're here to help! Our expert service department is happy to perform required maintenance, too, should you not have the time, special tools or inclination to do it yourself.