

How To Clean Your Bike (And Keep It Clean)

The hardest thing for most cyclists to keep clean is the chain. It gets gunked up over time and the black goo has a way of getting on your hands, bike clothes and elsewhere (especially if you make the mistake of carrying the bike in your vehicle).

Go Easy On The Lube And Use The Right Lube

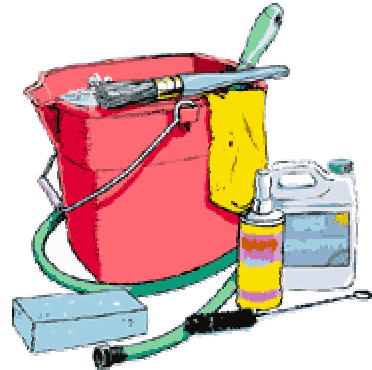
To keep the drivetrain clean, try to use the least amount of lube that will adequately lubricate your chain and derailleurs. Also, use a lube appropriate for your riding and conditions. We're happy to recommend lubes if you're not sure which brands or types are best for your needs.

When lubing the chain, let the oil soak in and then wipe off the excess. This helps prevent a buildup from developing. As soon as you notice grime, spend a few moments wiping the chain clean with a rag. It only takes minutes to give the links the once over like this and it can go a long ways towards maintaining a lubricated-but-tidy chain.

Cleaning Muddy Bikes

Another challenge is mud. The best approach is to deal with it immediately upon returning from your ride. Why? If you let the mud dry it's more difficult to remove without scratching your frame. When you wash it off before it dries, it rinses right off saving you scrubbing and possible paint-job damage. Be sure to apply lube to the chain, brakes and derailleur after rinsing so that the water doesn't cause squeaking and corrosion.

The easiest way to keep your bike(s) clean is to assemble a simple cleaning kit consisting of a bucket, some brushes and sponges and some detergent (illustration). With this handy, when your bikes dirty, you can fill the bucket with warm soapy water and gently clean off the mud and dirt. Then rinse the suds off with a hose trickling the water over the bike from the top. Never blast high-pressure water at the bike because it can wash the lubricant off parts and out of the bearings, which will cause serious problems later.



Proper Bike Storage

How you store your bike can affect how clean it stays, too. It's best to keep it inside away from the aging affects of the weather. It takes a while, but even if the bike is under an overhang, if it's stored outside, dampness in the air will rust the steel parts, ozone will attack the tires and sunshine will fade the paint. If you live near the ocean, it's especially important to keep the bike indoors because the salt in the air will corrode things extremely quickly.

An easy way to store a bicycle indoors is to purchase bike hooks from us. These question-mark-shaped hooks screw into a stud in the wall and hold the bike by a wheel. Or, you can install two hooks, one for each wheel so the bike can hang horizontally (upside-down). With a few of these hooks, it's possible to hang many bikes in the garage or house.

A higher-tech storage solution is a stand that displays the bike. If you've got a beautiful bike (aren't they all?), one of these racks holds the machine proudly (usually the stand supports two bikes, one low and one high) showing off your prize possession for all to see.