



20-Minute Bike Check-Up

The weather is finally nice and you're ready to dust off your bike and ride, but is your bike ready for you? Here are easy steps to make sure everything is road- or trail-worthy before heading out for your first ride.

1 Check your tire pressure Most tires gradually lose pressure over time, and if you leave your bike sitting long enough the tubes will be close to flat. Check the sidewall of the tire and fill to the manufacturer's recommended pressure range. While you're at it, inspect your tires closely. If they look dried and cracked, it's time for new ones.

2 Check your chain A worn out chain can impact performance, or worse, break and leave you stranded. Measure any section of chain from pin-to-pin. It should come out to 12 inches exactly. If it's longer than 12½ inches from pin to pin, it's definitely time for a new one. A dry, rusty chain leads to poor shifting, increased wear and a whole lot of nasty squeaking. Apply a good coat of a bike-specific chain lube like TriFlow (**Note:** Do not use WD-40 on your chain!), let it soak in for 10 minutes then wipe off the excess. Repeat once a week.

3 Check your brakes Give the lever a good squeeze. The lever should feel firm and return quickly upon release. If it doesn't, there's a good chance your brake cables are dry and/or rusted, and it's time to replace them. Also check your brake pads and make sure that they're contacting the rims evenly, and there's a good amount of pad left. Most brake pads have a wear indicator (usually a line or notches built into the pad) and if they're worn to that point, or they're close to the metal pad holder on the brakes, it's time for new ones.

4 Re-adjust your suspension settings Most modern bikes come with some form of suspension. If your bike is equipped with an air-sprung fork and/or rear suspension system, it may have gradually lost a little air over time. Carefully follow your bike manufacturer's suggestions to check and properly inflate your fork and shock to optimum riding pressure. There's a wide variety of suspension systems out there; if you're not sure what you have or how to adjust it, take it to your local dealer.

5 Don't Forget the helmet Something as innocent as hairspray, sunscreen or petroleum products can damage your helmet. Are there cracks, dents or chunks missing from the foam liner? Are the buckles cracked? Are the straps cut, frayed or discolored? All of these are signs that it's time to replace it.

Final Once-Over

Inspect your bike from top to bottom. Take care of any loosened bolts and wipe up any dirty spots with an environmentally-friendly cleaner like



Simple Green (don't wash your bike as you would your car, or you risk damaging delicate parts.)

Is your headlight working? Is your seat comfortable? Bell has a full line of accessories available at your local mass retailer to make biking more convenient, comfortable



and fun, including the GelTech Ultimate Comfort seat and GelTech Seat Covers, rechargeable headlightsthat don't require batteries and FlatBlocker puncture resistant, self-sealing tires and tubes. These can all be installed yourself at home, and will keep you rolling comfortably along all summer long!

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