

After you buy a bike it needs to be maintained on a regular basis. It will last for years if you look after it, but there are certain parts that wear out including tyres, brake pads and cables.

And ride ride your bike with consideration. If you treat it badly, expect to be needing repairs often. Jumps and tricks are a lot of fun, but come at a price.

- All parts of the drive train need lubricating – chain, gears, brake pivot points etc.
- Tyres need pumping up and condition checked.
- Over time, chains stretch, brake and gear cables stretch and rust and need replacing.
- Brake pads wear out
- The bike gets dirty – and needs regular cleaning.
- Regular check to see nothing's come loose.
- Useful tools include a metric set of Allen Keys, a range of screwdrivers, multi-grips and



pliers, chain-breaking tool, tyre levers, tyre pump, suitable oil and cleaning products.

- A good time to check your bike is after every ride and also before the next one.

- Check tire pressure. If it's low (if the tire feels squishy), fill to the correct PSI - which is listed on side of your tire.
- Glance over the tire tread on both tires for embedded debris, to avoid getting a flat.
- If you have quick release parts (such as wheels or seatposts), check that they are tight and that the wheels are secure.
- Spin wheels to check for wobbles. If the wheel wobbles, this indicates that you need to have your wheel trued.
- Squeeze brakes to make sure they're grabbing and that the pads touch the rims, not the tires.
- Check the seat height - adjust if necessary.
- If you have a mountain bike, push down on and release the suspension to be sure that it's responding properly.

- Handlebar end plugs fitted.
- Look over the bike chain. Add chain lube if it looks dry.
- Ensure that the bike is fitted with a bell, and working lights if needed.

- When out on a ride - carry spare tubes for the bikes and repair equipment including tyre levers.
- When a flat tyre occurs, take the wheel out of the bike and remove the tyre and old tube.
- Check inside the tyre for anything sharp, and remove if necessary.
- Find the hole and apply a patch, dry the adhesive before reassembling.
- Or instal tyre a new tube.
- Pump up the tyre and check that it's holding air.

Check the brakes - spin each wheel and test by squeezing the brake levers on the handlebars. Left lever for rear brake, right lever for front brake. Possible problems:

- If the brake lever moves a long way before the brakes engage
- If the brake pads contact the braking surface without you pulling the lever too far, but are ineffective at slowing the bike.
- If the brakes are hard to apply, and/or sluggish to release.
- If the two brake pads do not contact the braking surface at the same time - your brakes are not centred.
- The brake pad touches the tyre rather than the rim.

Adjustment is achieved using a 6mm Allen Key or small ring spanners (usually 8, 9, or 10mm).

Maintaining a bike is really rewarding skills for parents of young kids, and can be passed on to the kids as they grow up. Some examples above.