



What you need to check every time you ride your bike....

1. Tyre pressure – Riding on under-inflated tyres can cause flats and damage your wheels. Pumping up tires is a lot easier than fixing bent wheels. It is best to check it with a pressure gauge and not by eye or hand/thumb.

2. Chain lube – Riding with a dry chain wears the chain's moving parts out faster. This, in turn, wears out everything else on your drive train faster: cassette, chain rings, even the little pulleys on your derailleur. Before throwing a leg over the bike, back-pedal a half-revolution and listen for squeaking from your chain. If it's squeaky, looks dry, or even if it's just been a while since you lubed it last, take a second to apply some fresh oil to the chain.

3. Your brakes – before you start rolling, squeeze each brake a couple times to make sure they're working. Squeeze them again lightly as you start rolling to feel for uneven braking due to wheel damage, or the change in braking vibration that can mean your brakes are rubbing the tyre rather than the metallic braking surface of the rim. If any of these symptoms occur, ensure that you fix them before riding.

4. Clipless pedals – If you find something that interferes with disengaging your foot from the pedals, you might just save yourself from keeling over at the next stop sign. It's hard to look cool when you're on the ground with your feet stuck in your pedals. As you engage the cleat and pedal, take a minute to clip out and back in again once or twice. If it feels rough or stuck, it might be a pebble stuck in your cleat. That's easy to fix. But if it feels sloppy and loose, or feels uneven but doesn't improve with a little light oil on the retention mechanism, you might have a broken cleat or pedal. That's more likely to require a trip into one of our stores. More than one rider has been injured by falling over in clipless pedals they couldn't get out of. Don't mess with the cleat tension unless you understand what you're doing, and give yourself a chance to get used to any changes in a safe test-ride environment.

5. Feel for loose parts - Some loose parts will cause things to wear out faster, while others can cause crashes. Either reason is good enough for to check for loose parts. As you mount and push off, feel for anything unusual. The force of your weight on the bike and the first couple pedal strokes will usually make serious problems like loose wheels, saddles, handlebars or accessories apparent with a clunking sensation.

6. Listen for unusual noises - Since bikes are so quiet, you can detect problems early with a good ear. Early detection means less expensive repairs and safer riding. As you start out on your ride, listen for unusual sounds of scraping, rattling, rubbing, or creaking. Pay attention to rhythm. Noises that start & stop with your pedaling are usually symptoms of something in the drive train or parts of the bike that bear your weight. Wheel & brake noises will get faster as the bike accelerates, and continue whether or not you're pedaling. Stop and see if you can figure it out. If you can't, it might not always be necessary to scrap the ride. Little noises can be really hard to track down, and if there aren't any other symptoms, it might not require immediate attention.

This article has been sourced with thanks to our vast network of cycling friends that make up the PIHC Cycling Club – a social and clinical network created for the health and wellness of cyclists in the community. This article is in the public domain therefore passing it to those who can be assisted is encouraged.

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