

Bike Cleaning 101

Your bike should be cleaned regularly to keep the gears from wearing and to keep things running smoothly. The drive train is silver, after all, not black and should look that way!

Don't go to a car wash and use a high pressure hose. It'll get water into places where the sun don't shine and this is not a good thing. Instead, opt for your simple garden hose on a nice, "summer shower" setting.

Collect the following items: bucket, stiff nylon bristled grout brush, rags, Simple Green (SG) (get a gallon and a spray bottle), bike oil

If possible, put your bike on a stand. It makes it much easier. Shift to the highest gear. Strip off your bike bags, heart monitor, cycle computer and anything else you don't want to get wet. (Leave your saddle on)

Spray the bike off w/ a hose. Spray your drive train w/ full strength SG: chain, freewheel (aka cassette), cogs, derailleur

Dip your brush in diluted SG and hold brush on the freewheel while turning the crank. Redip the brush often to add more SG. Spray w/ water, then scrub again until all the black gunk is off and everything is silver again. Rinse w/ water.

Now clean the front chain rings. Start on the outside ring. Dip brush in SG often. Turn cranks and place brush in center so bristles rub on both sides of the ring.

Shift so chain moves onto another ring, then clean exposed ring.

Clean chain. Use full strength SG in a chain cleaner. Fill to at or above fill line. Put chain in smallest front ring. Attach chain cleaner to bottom of chain. Turn crank to spin chain. SG will froth. Dump SG and add new and repeat. Do this 3 times.

Clean frame. Rinse whole bike to wet (including handle bars and saddle)
Begin w/ wheels. With rag, cup around tire, applying pressure to rim and rotate wheel, cleaning tire and rim. This is a good time to check your tires for damage. Then clean under bottom bracket (under cranks), then under forks. Next wet and wash tubes in sections (so they stay wet). Then wash pedals. Rinse thoroughly as you go before SG dries.

Take bike off stand. Lift and bounce wheels on ground gently to shake off water. Hold upside down to let any water drip off. Then set in sun to dry, turning so both sides are exposed to sun. Allow to dry thoroughly (about 1/2 hour in our climate) (Lubricant won't stick to wet parts)

Oil bike

Squirt thin stream of oil on chain on top of freewheel while turning crank. Cycle through gears to get it on the freewheel. Put more oil on chain, then cycle through large chain ring. Oil every pivot point on drive train. This means every place where there is movement. Some things move back and forth, others move side to side. Wiggle things to see where there is movement, then oil. Wipe metal clean as you oil. There needs to be oil in every place where 2 pieces of metal move, not on the surface. Also oil springs. Don't get oil on brake pads.