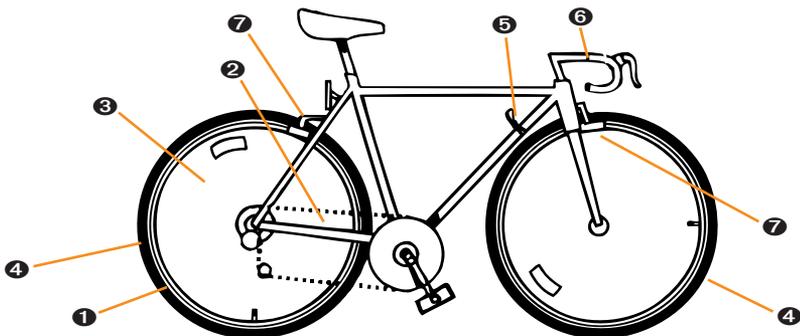




2: QUICK MAINTENANCE CHECKS

Safety starts with your bike. Whether you use your bike a lot or you're dusting off an old bike, this page gives you a few simple things to check for a safe ride. While these checks help you find problems, we don't have room to tell you how to fix them all. If you need help, go to your owner's manual, a maintenance book, or a bike shop.



1 Air: Tires lose a little air every day. If your gauge says a tire is more than five pounds under the needed pressure (printed on the side of the tire), add air. No gauge? Push each tire hard against a curb. If you can flatten it, add air.

2 Chain: A dry chain can skip, lock up, or break suddenly. If your chain squeaks or hangs up, lubricate it. Oil will do, but it attracts dirt; a greaseless chain lubricant's best. To lubricate:

a. Grab the bottom of the chain loosely with a lint-free rag. With the other hand turn the pedals backward, sliding the chain through the rag. Pedal the chain around twice to remove grime.

b. With one hand squeeze or spray lubricant onto the chain, and with the other hand pedal the chain backward so it goes completely around once (twice if really rusty).

c. Repeat step (a) to get the excess lubricant off the chain. Extra lube can attract dirt.

3 Wheel Spin: Lift each wheel up and give it a slow spin. (Spin the back wheel forward so the pedals don't move.) Check that it doesn't rub against the brake pads, frame, or something else. If the wheel won't spin freely but it's not rubbing, the axle might have a problem.

4 Tires: Turn each wheel very slowly and look for big cuts, bulges, bubbles, or places you can see the inner casing. If you spot any, replace the tire. Remove glass or other debris. If the valve stem doesn't point straight at the middle of the wheel, the rim might cut it; let the air out and straighten the valve.

5 Shifting: Try all of your gears, shifting each gear lever from high to low. You have a problem if the lever sticks, you can't shift to all gears, the chain rubs the derailleur, or the chain jumps off the gears. These are usually caused by worn or dirty cables, or a derailleur that needs cleaning or adjustment.

6 Handlebars: Hold the front tire between your legs and try to turn the handlebars. If they're loose, tighten the stem bolt.

7 Brakes: You should have your brakes adjusted or replaced if you have any of these problems: (a) when you apply the brake on each wheel, one or both brake pads don't touch the rim; (b) you can squeeze your brake lever all the way to the handlebars; (c) on each wheel, the brake can't stop the tire from moving on dry, clean pavement.

Loose Parts: Pick up the bike and shake it hard. Check and fix anything that rattles.

SOME GOOD BOOKS ON BIKE REPAIR

Anybody's Bike Book, by Tom Cuthbertson

Bicycling Magazine's Basic Maintenance and Repair, by the Editors of *Bicycling* magazine

Sloane's New Bicycle Maintenance Manual, by Eugene A. Sloane

Roadside Bicycle Repairs, by Rob Van der Plas

Check each time you ride!

