

DIRT BIKE PRE-RIDE CHECKLIST

A quick check before every ride



Taking a few minutes to look over your motorcycle can prevent mechanical problems, bike damage, and unnecessary crashes. Make this part of your routine every time you ride.

1 TIRES

- ☐ Check tire pressure.
- ☐ Look for obvious tire or tube problems.
- ☐ Adjust pressure for the terrain if needed.

12–13 PSI Intermediate terrain, tracks, or trails
14–15 PSI Mud, sand, or sharp rocky conditions
10–12 PSI Smooth rock or hardpack

Lower pressure may improve traction but can increase the risk of flats.

Running tire mousse inserts? Air-pressure checks can be skipped.

3 SPOKES

- ☐ Check for loose spokes.
- ☐ Lightly run a spoke wrench across uncoated spokes and listen for noticeably dull or rattling ones.
- ☐ If the spokes are coated, gently squeeze several together and feel for excessive movement.
- ☐ Snug loose spokes at the nipple near the rim.

Do not overtighten. A torque spoke wrench is useful for confirming proper specification.

2 CHAIN & SPROCKETS

- ☐ Check sprockets for worn, hooked, or missing teeth.
- ☐ Check chain slack at the end of the chain slider.
- ☐ Make sure the chain is not excessively tight or loose.
- ☐ Lubricate the chain as needed.

Quick chain-slack reference:

Approximately 3 fingers for men or 4 fingers for women/youth between the chain and swingarm at the check point described in the bike guide.

Roller chain: Use chain lubricant.

O-ring chain: Lubricate after washing with an appropriate metal lubricant.

4 FLUIDS & LEAKS

- ☐ Check engine oil level if possible.
- ☐ Check coolant level when appropriate.
- ☐ Look underneath the motorcycle for oil or coolant leaks.
- ☐ Address any unexplained fluid loss before riding.

HOT COOLANT WARNING

Never remove the radiator cap while the engine is hot. The cooling system can remain pressurized and release boiling coolant or steam when opened. Allow the motorcycle to cool completely before removing the radiator cap.

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5 CONTROLS

THROTTLE

- ☐ Twist and release the throttle several times.
- ☐ Make sure it snaps back smoothly.
- ☐ Check for sticking, grinding, or hesitation.

CLUTCH

- ☐ Make sure the lever moves smoothly.
- ☐ Confirm normal resistance and engagement.

FRONT BRAKE

- ☐ Squeeze the lever.
- ☐ Make sure it feels firm, not unusually soft or spongy.

REAR BRAKE

- ☐ Press the pedal.
- ☐ Confirm proper engagement.
- ☐ Make sure the pedal returns normally.

SHIFT LEVER

- ☐ Check that the lever is secure on the shift shaft.
- ☐ Tighten the clamp bolt if applicable and loose.

If a control does not operate normally, fix the problem before riding.

6 RELEASE FORK AIR

COMPETITIVE MODELS

- ☐ Make sure the front wheel is off the ground.
- ☐ Release built-up fork pressure using the fork bleeder screws or buttons on each fork.

With the motorcycle cold and on a center stand.

7 QUICK BOLT CHECK

- ☐ Walk around the motorcycle and visually check common fasteners.
- ☐ Pay extra attention to bolts you know tend to loosen on your bike.
- ☐ Tighten anything that has worked loose.

If the same fastener repeatedly loosens, consider appropriate medium-strength thread locker when suitable for that fastener.

BEFORE YOU RIDE

Tires ✓ Chain ✓ Spokes ✓ Fluids ✓ Controls ✓ Forks ✓ Bolts ✓

If something feels wrong, figure out why before heading onto the track or trail.

GEAR-BAG BASICS

Tire-pressure gauge • tire inflator • spoke wrench • basic metric wrenches/sockets • chain lubricant • screwdriver • oil/coolant as needed

RIDE SMART. BUILD SKILLS. KEEP PROGRESSING.

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