

Motorcycle Pre-ride checklist

Check over your motorcycle before you ride - quick checklist to ensure your motorbike is safe and ready to ride. (a useful tip - check over your bike after you ride, giving you more time to fix any problems before the next ride)

A motorcycle needs a few minutes to warm up before riding, so take this time to do your Pre-ride Check!

1. Conduct a quick walk-around the motorcycle and check for any obvious issues that may stand out such as:

- Coolant leak
- Oil leak
- Fork oil leak
- Dirty chain
- Low tyre pressure, low tyre tread
- Registration plate secure and visible
- Loose fairings, foot pegs, mirrors or controls

2. Conduct a closer visual inspection of the bike such as:

- Check the oil, coolant and brake fluid colour and levels.
- Have a quick look over the tyres for any potential damage or punctures.
- Check rims for any dents or cracks
- Check the chain and sprockets for any damage and make sure its relatively clean and lubed.
- Check the chain tightness, you want a little play in the chain
- Brake pads, how worn are they
- Fuel, how much is in the bike and how long has it been sitting
- Check the side stand (kickstand) - firmly held in place and operational
- Check clutch, throttle controls and brake levers and controls

3. Start the motorcycle

- How quick does it turn over? If it's hard to start it may be a range of different issues that will require further investigation.
- It may just be cold and require a bit more time to kick over. A hard to start motorcycle may have underlying conditions that can leave you stranded like a dying battery or engine problems.
- Check the electricals - blinkers, brake lights, headlights, horn, registration plate lights
- If checking oil level, let it warm up for a minute, turn off the bike then check.

4. Let the motorcycle warm up for a few minutes, pay attention to how its idling. Listen to the engine and pay attention for any obvious signs something is wrong, such as weird noises or blue smoke or oil burning smells from the exhaust.

While your machine is warming up to operating temperature, do a quick pre-ride check over your gear. Your gear will wear over time so check the stitching, cleanliness and look for damage.

5. When you start riding check the clutch and brakes before getting up to speed, pay attention to anything that feels different than usual both feel and noise wise.

Once you have conducted this pre-ride check a few times it will become second nature and get you in a good habit. A quick post-ride check will add an extra layer of safety and give you time to fix any issues before the next ride. Not only can a pre and post ride check improve motorcycle safety, it can also save you money if you can spot any issues in the early stages of development. The main aim of these checks are to prevent any big problems or failures that are an immediate danger to riding the machine. You will still need to schedule time for regular maintenance and servicing outside of your pre-ride checks.