

# Motorcycle chain lube and how to clean motorcycle air filters painlessly!

## Motorcycle chain lube and chain maintenance

Motorcycle chain lube and general chain maintenance can be something that's easily overlooked but considering the amount of strain and abuse your chain and sprockets have to take it pays to keep your maintenance up to scratch.

### Chain tension

Check your manufacturers handbook for the correct tension for your bike. The general rule of thumb is 15-20mm (.59in-.78in) with the swingarm horizontal to the ground. Either remove the shock or have a friend lean on the bike and compress the suspension until the swingarm is horizontal then adjust the chain to the correct amount of play, then when you have the bike on a stand with the rear wheel off the ground measure the amount of play so you'll know for future reference.

### Motorcycle chain lube

Most of the motorcycle chain lubes being made by the major manufacturers are all pretty good, they'll all tell you their product is the best of course, so there's really only a few things to look out for.

Look for a lube that is coloured so it's easy to see where the lube is on the chain. Depending on the type of riding you're doing may affect how sticky a lube you use. I was using Bel-Ray chain lube which was very sticky on the chain but when it flung off it made a real mess all over the wheel and under the rear guard of the bike. I then switched to a Shell motorcycle chain lube which was thinner and didn't make such a mess.

Consider the type of riding you do, if you're out on the trail all day then go for a thick sticky lube, if you're at the track and can re-lube between each moto then go for a thinner motorcycle chain lube and save yourself the mess.

When you apply the lube, spray it on the inside of the chain where it contacts the sprockets where you need it the most.

This is probably one of the best tips I know about chain maintenance, **never leave your chain wet**. Once they start to develop rust around the pins that run through the rollers, the chain will deteriorate quickly.

After you've washed your chain and given it a good scrub, spray it with de-watering fluid, particularly with non o-ring chains. Still use your motorcycle chain lube but the chain lube doesn't usually cover the surface of the chain completely. Also if you come home from riding and aren't going to wash your bike right away, give the chain a quick spray.

One other tip to help maximise chain life is to regularly change your front countershaft sprocket. Considering that the front sprocket will do about three rotations for every one rotation of your larger rear sprocket, it makes sense that it will wear quicker. Replace it regularly and you will get a longer life out of your more expensive rear sprocket and chain.

### **Motorcycle air filters**

Cleaning motorcycle air filters is one of the worst jobs I know with bikes (changing tyres is the other one!), so here is the method I use.

Put on some gloves and give the element a clean in some petrol or filter solvent, filter manufacturers frown on petrol because it apparently damages the glue used to hold the filter together but I've always used petrol (hey, it's cheap!), just don't leave the filter element sitting in it for any length of time.

Once you've squeezed all the petrol out of the filter (**squeeze, don't wring the filter, you'll damage the foam**), give it a good wash in warm soapy water and rinse. While you're there give the filter cage a clean too. Again squeeze the excess water out and leave it to dry.

Find yourself an airtight container, I use a cake serving container because it has a meshed tray in the bottom of it which allows any sediment or gunk to sit on the bottom of the container away from the filter element when you dip it in.

Buy a couple of bottles of good motorcycle air filter oil, I use a Motul product, and pour them into the container. Dunk the filter element in the oil making sure it's completely soaked and then squeeze the excess oil out, fit the element to the filter cage and put a thin smear of grease around the lip of the filter so that it seals well in the airbox.

While the filter element's out check that the boot that runs into the inlet of your carby is clean, carefully give it a wipe out if necessary. Fit the filter to the airbox and you're done!.

A good idea is to have 2 or 3 filters, this is handy on race day so you can just change the filter element out with a pre-oiled one and also you can clean and oil all your filters at the one time.