

How to wash your bike as easily as possible.

As washing your bike should be a regular part of your maintenance, here is the routine I go through to keep my bike nice and shiny.

Get yourself an exhaust plug and plug the end of your bike muffler, if you're on a super tight budget then I've seen guys use wine bottle corks but you'll look like a tool so just buy a plug, they're pretty cheap. Take your seat off and remove your air filter. With the air filter out put an air filter cover in place in the airbox, Acerbis make a cover for a huge range of bikes, again these covers are pretty cheap and are worth their weight in gold because you can give your airbox a good spray.

Wash your seat separately, you don't want the foam to get wet so give it a quick wash and don't soak it when you rinse it off.

Give the bike a good spray with a quality detergent, there are some good detergents around specifically for washing bikes, I use Teepol Gold which is pretty good. Leave the detergent to soak in for a bit and then fire up the pressure washer. If you don't have a pressure washer you can buy a nozzle that attaches to the end of your hose which can greatly increase your water pressure.

While you're washing the bike be careful not to spray water directly into bearings and electrical components. Turn your fuel tap off and lay the bike over so you can give it a good wash underneath.

If you've been riding in muddy conditions it's a good idea to clean between your fork dust seals and the fork seals themselves. Get a small screwdriver and prise the dust seals away from the fork seals. Clean out any mud and dirt with a GENTLE spray of water, too much pressure and you'll force the dirt past the fork seal.

Once it's all nice and clean there's a couple of preventative measures you can take. I pack in between the dust seal and the fork seal with waterproof grease but something else I've seen is to get some fine weave rag and cut a thin strip. Soak this in fork oil and put it in between the dust seal and the fork seal. The idea of this is so that when the forks compress, the grease or rag will catch any dirt making its way past the dust seal and also will lubricate the fork leg as it slides past the fork seal. Makes your fork seals last a whole lot longer.

Once you're done washing the bike, remove any water that may have worked its way into the carby by undoing the nut in the base of the carby and draining it. Fit a clean air filter into the airbox and put the seat back on then start the bike. Let it run until it's warm, the heat will evaporate any water from around the motor and electrics etc.

Give your chain a spray with dewatering fluid and then lube it well. Also spray dewatering fluid on any exposed metal parts where the paint has worn off and also spray the exhaust system, spoke nipples, shocker shaft and fork legs etc. If you're super keen, you can use a silicone based spray to wipe over your plastics to make them nice and shiny. There are products made specifically for this job but I found that a bottle of Nifti or furniture polish works just as well and is cheaper.

Regularly washing your bike will not only keep it looking good and help with the resale value, but also makes any faults or maintenance problems easier to spot.