

HOW TO CODDLE AND CARE FOR YOUR BICYCLE

A CLEAN BIKE IS A HAPPY BIKE

Keeping your bike clean is the best way to minimize wear and prevent costly repairs.

- during wet weather, wipe your rims and brake pads every few days. Your brakes will work better, and your rims and brake pads will last longer.
- wipe rims by holding a rag against the rim sides as you spin the wheel with a rag, soap and water (no solvents, steel wool or sandpaper on your rims, please).
- clean your chain by back-pedaling it through a rag or chain-cleaning device, using a bit of paint thinner or special solvent. Or have your bike shop clean your chain and drive-train for you.
- lube your chain *after* you clean it—don't lube a dirty chain!
- use only as much lubricant as you need to keep your chain from drying out or squeaking. A too-oily chain attracts dirt.



- keep your rear derailleur jockey wheels, rear chainrings (cogset), and front chainrings clear of clotted grease and dirt.

A LITTLE LUBE GOES A LONG WAY

All exposed moving parts need a bit of lubricant now and then. Brake levers and calipers, derailleurs, gear and brake cables and the chain all work better when oiled, preferably with a decent-grade bicycle oil. Your seatpost, stem and pedal threads should be smeared with non-lithium grease to prevent them from seizing. Wipe off any excess lube.

A QUICK BIKE CHECKUP

Here's a quick, thorough checkup for your bike. If you have any of the following symptoms your bike needs servicing.

All-over: Pick up your bike and drop it from a height of 10–15 cm (that's *cm*, not inches or feet!). Does it rattle? Where? Identify the source.

Shifters and derailleurs: Do all your gears work without chattering, and do they shift smoothly? If not, your shifters or derailleurs may need adjustment.

Brakes and levers: Both front and rear brakes should “grab” enough to stop your bike quickly, without jarring. If they're loose, or if they squeal or grind, they may need adjustment, or your brake pads may be worn down (see “wheels”). Your brake levers should never be loose enough to touch the handlebars when squeezed.

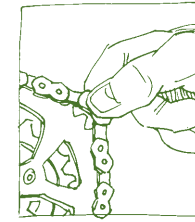
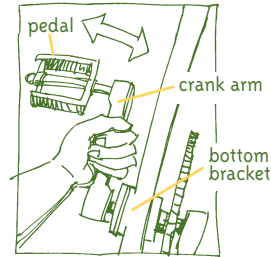
Bottom Bracket: Grasp your crank arm where the pedal meets the arm and try to move the arm side to side. There should not be any movement.

Headset: Grip your front brake lever, locking the front wheel, and rock the bike back and forth. Is there any clicking, knocking or movement? Pick up the front of the bike by the frame, gently turn the handlebars from side to side and feel for any roughness or clicking.

Frame: If your bike has been in an accident, have it assessed by a professional or shop guru.

Seatpost and stem: Check that the seatpost and stem are not raised above their maximum lines.

wiggle the crank to check the bottom bracket



check for chain stretch or worn chainring teeth

Cables: Check your brake and gear (derailleur) cables for broken strands at either end, rust or corrosion on the cables, or cracks and breaks in the cable housings.

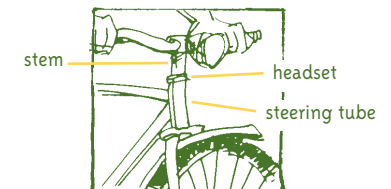
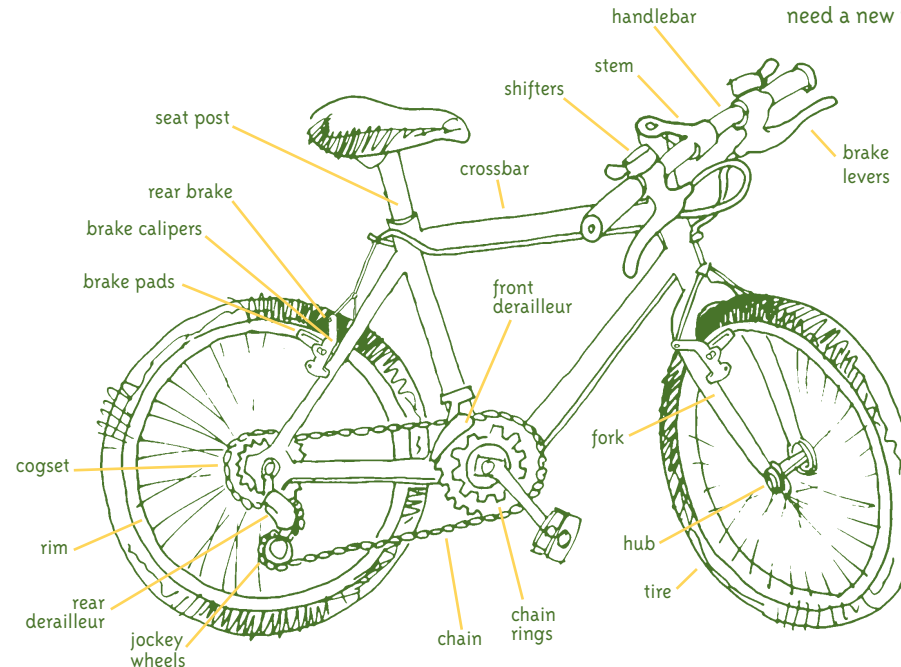
Chain and chainrings: If the teeth on the chainrings are pointy like a saw blade, they may need replacement. Try to pull one chainlink away from the front chainring in the middle of the chain section which is in contact with the ring. If the chain has stretched so that it reveals the tip of a chainring tooth, it may be time for a new chain.

WHEELS:

- **Rims:** Pick up the bike and spin each wheel. They should pass the brake pads without rubbing. If a wheel seems to move back and forth (wobbles) in relation to the pads, it needs truing (spoke tension adjustment). Usually it's best to let a pro true your wheels. If the rim surface feels concave when you run a finger along the braking surface, it may be time for a new rim.
- **Tires:** Inspect your tires for lumps or cuts. When you spin the wheels do you see any lumps in the rotating tire? If so, you may need a new tire.

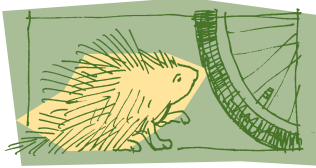
• **Hubs:** Hold your wheel near the brake and try to move the wheel side to side. If there is any movement, your hub may need adjustment or repair.

• **Brake pads:** Your brake pads should strike the rim squarely in the center of the rim surface, not contacting the tire or ducking below the rim surface. Are the pads worn past their wear lines? If so, it may be time to adjust, rotate, or replace the brake pads.



FLAT TIRES: FACING THE INEVITABLE

Someday, somewhere, usually when it's raining and you're running late...a flat tire will happen to you. But it needn't ruin your day, or delay you for more than ten minutes. Practice replacing a tube at home so you'll be confident when the moment comes. Ask a friend or bike guru to coach you through the procedure. Learn to fix your own flat, and feel like a hero.



PREVENTION

- high-pressure tires tend to repel pointy things and prevent tube pinching on hard bumps; however, during hot summer days, keep your tires at 5-10 psi below recommended max. to allow for heat expansion
- use puncture-resistant belted tires, solid tires, tire liners, thorn-proof tubes or liquid tube sealant
- watch for tire wear (see WHEELS section, above)

ROADSIDE REPAIR

The kit: to be prepared for a flat tire, always carry a small pump (make sure it's the right kind for your valves, or carry a valve adapter), spare tube, patch kit, tire levers, and axle-nut wrench (if your bike doesn't have quick-release axles). It's also a good idea to carry a small emergency kit with you at all times, including a small wrench and multitool (or Allen key set and screwdriver).

The procedure: Get your bike guru (seasoned mechanic or patient roommate) to show you how to replace and patch a tube.

Finding a small puncture in a tube can be tricky, so rather than trying to patch a flat by the side of the road, be prepared to simply pop in your spare tube and patch the injured one later. But carry a patch kit anyway, in case the deities are displeased with you, and you get a second flat. To curry favour with deities, don't forget to run your fingers carefully along the inside of the tire, in case a chunk of glass or staple is lodged inside.

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B.E.S.T. is a non-profit, community-based organization working to promote sustainable alternatives to the private automobile.

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Other City Cycling Essentials to check out:

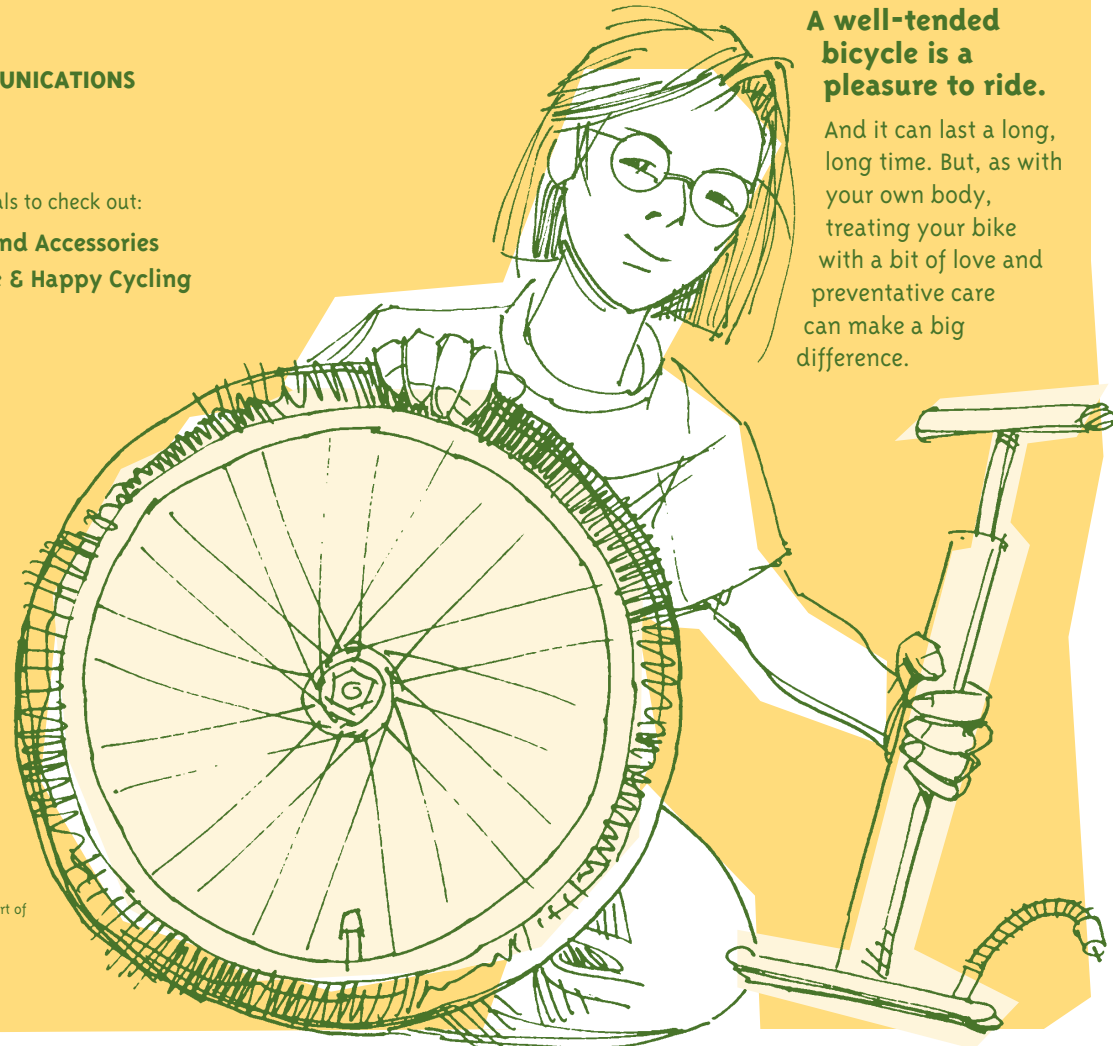
- **Choosing a Bicycle and Accessories**
- **Tips & Tricks for Safe & Happy Cycling**

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HOW TO CIDDLE & CARE FOR YOUR BICYCLE

**A well-tended
bicycle is a
pleasure to ride.**

And it can last a long, long time. But, as with your own body, treating your bike with a bit of love and preventative care can make a big difference.



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