

Common Maintenance for New R* owners.

Last Update: Saturday, July 24, 2004

Check your left and maybe even your right side button head allen bolts that are between the frame and the swingarm pivot to make sure they haven't loosened or fallen out. I've seen TOO MANY missing ones. (IslandStar)

Lube your cables twice a year to keep them from binding and possibly breaking. While the cable lube should be done, a good wheel grease on the ends of the cables, (where they hook into the applicable levers), is needed also. (Odo)

Spray some, (WD-40), on the kickstand switch and the seat latch! (Footpegs)

When I used to dirt bike, I always, (and still do), run something around the spokes to make sure they're all tight. A metal wrench works fine! (Footpegs)

Kind of like how you check for tight spokes, the proper ones make a clear ringing sound, the loose ones just thud (Yoda)

Check tire pressure weekly. Use Ride-On tire sealant to help with tube porosity, occasional nails/screws, balance and keep tires running cooler. Cheap insurance. (V-98)

Marvel Mystery oil.

2 ounces in the gas tank every 2 or 3 fill-ups. Great upper cylinder lubricant. Helps keep carbon build-up down. (V-98)

I know everybody is aware of this - run REGULAR 87 octane gas, not premium. Stock motor, with stock pistons runs BEST on unleaded regular! (Midnight Rider)

While waiting for the bike to warm-up check all lights: Brakes, blinkers, hi-lo beams. (Vapor Trails)

Lets not to forget those Pulley brace bolts before they are missing altogether.(don't ask me how I know) KEG (Kat)

A mirror under the bike to check the shock support brace at least every oil change. KEG (Kat)

Check your floorboard mounting bolts I have had mine vibrate out on the left side and I had trouble shifting, because, the board would tilt when I put pressure on the shifter. (Tezr)

I keep telling people about using Permatex, No Touch Tire Care spray foam, for dirty or dried out drive belts. Just spray it evenly on the ribbed inside of the belt, (But keep it off the tire tread, cause it's slippery). You'll think your bike is new again. (I should be getting a commission from Permatex). (48bumps)

If you get the low speed "chirp", (not the one you get on decel), a Crayon or a little wax of some kind, applied to the edges of the belt, will get rid of it. Just make sure you do the Tire Foam first, as it will wash away the wax. (48bumps)

VERIFY EVERYTHING THE DEALER TELLS YOU by posting on the Road Star Riders Forum !!! (Yoda)

When cleaning your windshield, only wipe with an up & down motion (not circular), using a soft cloth. That way, if the cloth puts any scratches in the shield, they won't show up as spider webs when headlights hit it at night. (Randy)

Use mink oil or other leather cleaner on leather accessories to protect from sun damage. (Randy)

Use a leaf blower or shop vac (reversed) to dry the bike after washing. (Randy)

Use tennis balls (split with knife) to plug the exhaust pipes during washing to prevent water from entering (and internally rusting) pipes. (Randy)

Do not use common dish washing liquid or other highly alkaline soap (Dawn is the worst) as it will strip the wax off. (Randy)

Check under the bike regularly (on the ground) for evidence of oil. (Randy)

For any motorcycle, run your bike on reserve to cleanout any crap or water that might have accumulated in the bottom of the tank. Do this near home so if it does die you don't have far to go for help. (Spucketts)

Change your fuel filter every couple of years. I matched one at an auto parts store 'cause its cheaper and more available than going to yamamomma. (Spucketts)

Check at the auto parts store for other parts, spark plugs, oil filters, etc. (Spucketts)

My reflective foil on the coils began to come off. Use metal duct tape to reapply. (Spucketts)

While you're checking your tire pressure, check the tire surface for cuts, nails, and screws. I've not yet had a flat (knock wood) but have pulled 8-10 pits of road crap out of the tread and sidewalls. (Spucketts)

Check the frame for cracks. Especially around rear shock mounts. This is more for safety. (Rickrack108)

How bout di-electric grease on all your light bulb/sockets to ease future replacement and to protect the socket from corrosion. (PhatBoy)

I use Simple Green to clean my white walls. Works great and does not require a lot of manual labor. (PhatBoy)

Mr. Clean spray wash for a spotless cleanup. (PhatBoy)

Use preset tire valve caps to indicate if air pressures have dropped in tires. (PhatBoy)

Monitor speedo pod at startup to see if any thing is out of the norm, indicators flashing in a repeating sequence means a sensor has failed. (PhatBoy)

(WARNING, this is a 'funny' from LUKAS). When you do maintenance you need only two tools: WD-40 and duct tape. If it doesn't move and it should, use WD-40. If it moves and shouldn't, use the duct tape. LUKAS

Pledge is a wonderful windshield cleaner. I think we all agree this one is a good one to know right from the start. (flyvertigo)

Unless you have a photographic memory, print out tips. Use a 3 ring binder, insert each page in a clear page protector to keep free of dirt & grime. Pages can then be wiped clean. Seperate subject matter with tab sheets for easy reference. This will save you running back and forth to the computer or trusting your memory for correct info. (Les)

Once a month, take torque wrench and torque chart in hand and go over several key bolted joints. Yes, side plates, (or transmission brace as some call them), but also: headlight bolts, exhaust header nuts, Main fender bolt, Rear gas tank bolt, belt guards, (on mine, with the Forcewinder set up, the air intake brace bolts), floorboard bolting (especially on after market boards), forward control mounting bolts, Handle bar clamp bolts (especially if your running apes or 1-1/4 or 1-1/2 dia. bars) and other highly vibrated fastened joints. (WRENCH 13 on LiL Sparky)

DONT use RED loctite unless specifically advised (ie tapered starter bolt) , use BLUE, which is removable. (WRENCH 13 on LiL Sparky)

Use copper bearing thread lubricant, (anti-seize), on high heat bolts (anything going into the heads) to help in removal (ie manifold bolts). (WRENCH 13 on LiL Sparky)

Rule of thumb, if you cant turn the nut by hand the first 2 threads, it ain't started correctly. These fine thread metric bolts are hard to start sometimes. DONT force it. (WRENCH 13 on LiL Sparky)

Grease: Standard "axle" grease, like you can get in a tub or tube (for grease guns). Lithium grease OR axle grease can be used to lube paper gaskets, so they don't become "glued" to engine or covers. (the Mucker)

Use silicone grease on the copper contacts and inside the plastic housings of electrical connectors AND inside bulb sockets. It'll keep them from corroding and insure they come apart when you need them to later. (the Mucker)

Signals and tail light bulbs often corrode in their sockets so bad that removal for replacement may be difficult or impossible, without damaging the socket. Use silicone grease in the sockets and on the contacts BEFORE they rot. And while you're inside the lamps, clean the inside of the lenses and make sure the rubber lens gasket seals the housing properly. (the Mucker)

Stock shifter linkage and side stand pivots need cleaning and lubing at least every couple years. More often if they're subjected to dusty roads and/or frequent soakings. (the Mucker)

Too much oil in the engine: As long as you don't go way overboard, it's not much of a concern, because engine oil level is maintained by the transfer pump. Oil level in the tank will vary according to total volume, but the engine's level will be relatively constant, as long as the tank has enough to maintain uninterrupted circulation while the engine is running. (the Mucker)

- * * Note. * * Having too much oil will, most likely, do nothing more than make a few seals 'weep'. The shifter and clutch levers, (at the clutch basket), will 'seep' oil, if you have too much oil in the engine. (Odo)

- Charging system testing, and 'when' we should run a 'check' on it: Good question. I tend to only check it if I have a reason to suspect something is amiss. If the headlight intensity varies according to engine RPM, or the starter seems to have a hard time getting the job done, then it's time to put a volt meter on the battery terminals. It should show at least 12 volts while not running and at least 13 volts (hopefully more) at middle RPMs. It probably is a good idea to check the charging system at least at the beginning of the riding season and every few months thereafter. (the Mucker)
- * * Note. * * I check my charging system twice a year. The battery will register 12.4 to 12.8 volts, while the bike is NOT running. It will register 14.2 to 14.8 while at a fast idle, (approximately), 2500 to 3000 RPM's. (Remember to have fresh batteries in your voltmeter when checking). (Odo)

Don't use anything but water on the stock spokes. (jd in miami)

- * Note. * * The stock spokes are cadmium plated. It's VERY soft !! Almost any type of abrasive cleaners will remove the plating. You'll get black spokes, if you use too much elbow-grease and abrasive cleaners ! (Odo)

Get a decent bike jack. You'll use it a lot. (Odo)

Buy or down-load the shop manual. You'll use it a lot. (Odo)

Don't leave it running in neutral, on any kind of incline. (Don't ask me how I know). (48bumps)

A quick and easy drive belt tension check is to twist it with your fingers. If you can twist it 90 degrees from horizontal to vertical, you're in the ballpark. Don't do this with pliers or any steel tool because the smallest nick can cause the belt to fray. (Salty Dog)

* * Note. * * Care if I substitute 45 degrees with 90 degrees, with fingers?

This is one I do all the time. 1/2" up and down play, (while on the sidestand), and no more than 45 degrees 'twist'. (Odo)

From Stevie; (Checking oil level)

1. Decide whether you want to check the bike before or after you ride it. If you leave your bike out in the cold - below about 55 degrees, then you should check afterward.
2. If checking your bike after you ride ... give it about five minutes to settle.
3. Hold it in a level and upright position for as long as you have patience (as close to a minute as you can tolerate).
4. Remove and wipe off the dipstick and set it back on top of the threads. Reading should be between the lines.
5. If at or above the top line then ... go to the 'Ruin the turkey baster' section. (Stevie)

Response to Stevie's 'tip':

Hey - No Need to waste a good turkey baster! Just Blame the odd taste onto the wife's 'cooking' - they are real understanding bout such things!!!! (Midnight Mike)

Might also add the clutch switch on the left handlebar up under there where you can't see it without looking from the bottom side. Good to hit that with WD40 type stuff every once in awhile. I've had it stick a couple of times. (MidnightRoady)

The use of a "Mr. Clean - Auto Dry" when washing the bikes works great! These can be bought at just about any department store and auto parts dealers. I wash the bikes with this, wait an hour, and they are clean and spot free. No drying needed.

This would go really well with the leaf blower suggestion. (RoadStarSlim)

When changing the oil and adding the new oil directly into the crankcase, don't over tighten the plug. It cracks easily. Treat it like a spark plug, screw it in until the o-ring contacts the case and 1/4 turn more is all that is needed. (T-Water)

An awful lot of us use a lift when cleaning or performing maintenance, but a tip to remember is to always use the locks to prevent the jack from leaking down and setting the bike down while you are making a beverage run... V-102 (Joe Friday)

If you put your bike on a lift, drop a rag over the hydraulic release valve to remind you to make sure the kickstand is down before lowering. (Jaxson)

Check the steering neck for grease they don't always have enough or come packed with grease from the factory. (draco37) * * *

* * * NOTE * * * When replacing the grease in the neck bearings and swingarm bearings. Flush them out with something like GUNK Spray Cleaner, first. Greases DO NOT mix very well. A good grease will break down to the lowest 'cheapest' grease if mixed. Use a Moly-Lithium Wheel Bearing Grease. This is highly water resistant AND will hold up under extreme pressure and heat. (Odo)

Cut a plastic liter or 750 ml. (can't remember) pop bottle in half. Turn upside down and screw threads into dipstick hole. You only need it to hook on a couple threads. Stops oil from burping all over the bike if you put in too much at first. (GrayCat5)

Periodically inspect inside the front pulley housing. Remove the cover, remove built up debris. Remove the two plastic rollers, clean and lube the posts, reassemble. Put the cover back on and make sure the belt tension and alignment are correct. (2StarRider)

Change front shock oil at recommended intervals (about 16,000 mi.) to help the dampening characteristics and handling of the front end. Did mine for the first time (22,500 mi.) and the oil was black. Rides a little firmer with fresh oil. (draco37)