



## **Beginner/Intermediate Group**

### **Bike Maintenance: Taking Care of Your Chain and Other Stuff That Moves on**

Dirt Happens. If not cleaned off it can damage your gears and chainrings, and make shifting increasingly difficult AND cost you money! Help eliminate “chain tattoos”! Look cleaner, ride easier and make your gear last longer by keeping it clean.

#### **CLEANING**

##### *Chain*

Minimize the damage to your bike by lightly rinsing the dirty parts with water to get the grit off. Don't use a power spray and be careful not to scratch the paint with wiping.

Once the grit is off, you're ready to clean the chain. One way to clean chains is with an on-the-bike cleaning machine. These are boxes which clip over the lower run of chain. They contain brushes and rollers that flex the chain and run it through a bath of either regular dish soap or degreaser. (Something like Simple Green works great and isn't toxic.) This cleaning tools clamp over the chain and clean the chain and the chain is backpedaled through the box. This should be done as many times as needed until chain is almost like new. Wipe chain with shop rag. Rinse with water and air dry.

##### *Derailleur Pulleys*

Don't forget to clean the derailleur pulleys. They tend to gunk up if not cleaned regularly. A toothbrush works pretty well to brush them clean.

##### *Chainrings and Gear Cluster*

Use warm soapy water or the degreaser and a brush (an old dishwashing brush works as good as the bike brushes do) to clean the chainrings and the rear cogs. A rag can be used to “floss” between the gears and to wipe down the chainrings.

*Pedals* Don't forget to wipe down your pedals, especially if you have ridden through mud or on dusty roads.

#### **LUBRICATION**

Always wipe off excess lubricant or your bike will attract dirt. Only if you are desperate should a non-bicycle lubricant be used.

##### *Chain*

There are three points where a chain needs lubrication. First, and most importantly, the rivets need to be lubricated where they move inside the inner links as the chain bends and straightens. Second, the insides of the rollers need lubrication to let them revolve freely around the bushings as they engage and disengage the sprocket teeth. If the rollers don't roll, they slide along the sprocket teeth, causing accelerated sprocket wear. Third, the surface where the outer side plates overlap the inner side plates can benefit from lubrication as well, although this contact surface is much more lightly loaded than the first two.

##### *Derailleur*

Any part that moves on your derailleur should be lubricated.

##### *Brakes*

Lube those pivot points.

##### *Pedals*

Only a drop is needed where the pedal spins.