

Motorcycle Cleaning and Maintenance Tips

Available on the internet at: http://www.gmasw.com/bikecln_.htm

Cleaning your ride. The arsenal of soaps, waxes, and cleaning agents is practically endless. I believed a motorcycle cleaning and maintenance tips page appropriate to my web site... so, here are some of my tips.

Wax: Mother's Carnuba (Cleaner) Wax - Using "wax" causes buildup on painted surfaces. Carnuba is a natural wax that wears off, and is easily cleaned.

Chrome and Mag Cleaner: Mother's - This is the best stuff I have found to date to polish (clean) chrome and aluminum. If your fingers aren't black, you aren't cleaning!

Metal Polish: Mother's Metal Polish – This is a very good product, but I don't use it as much as the other Mother's products (above). See Clean Cycle Products Miracle Metal Polish review noted at end of this document.

Metal Polish - Never Dull: When the job is really tough, hard-core cleaning demands the use of Never Dull. The liquid in the pad turns everything black (oxide), but restores tarnished aluminum and chrome (though it requires a lot of effort).

Brush(es): Kiwi Brush - The (shoe polish company) have a number of excellent products for cleaning motorcycles and cars. A brush used for those hard to get places looks like a small toilet bowl brush (red handle and less than one inch bristles). After using bottle sponges, baby bottlebrushes, and this one is a keeper and works well for those hard to get places around the engine and frame.

Wheel Brush (Wooden): Nothing special about this brush except that it is pig bristle with a wooden handle. It is easier to use than the Kiwi brush, but doesn't fit in tight places. Note: Bought a "plastic" handled wheel brush... it works fine.

Sponge (Industry Quality): A friend who owed a "bar supply" store gave me a heavy-duty sponge (about four to six bucks), but worth every penny. Soft and thick for holding water and soap... about 2.5 to 3 inches thick. Keep it away from wives and Mom's... oh... what the heck... buy them one so they don't take yours.

Soap: Mild detergent - S100 is what a friend uses on his 1999 Custom FXR. Doug never waxes his bike because S100 does such a good job. My choice is to use a mild car wash, but I pre-soak the bike with glass cleaner (car type) mixed with Rainex cleaner (for vehicle windshield washer solution). The pre-soak loosens road grit and grim. The pre-soak helps the cleaning process.

Drying: Leaf Blower - Doug, who uses S100, told me about drying his bike with a leaf blower. I needed an excuse to buy one... so... I bought one where Tim Allen shops... 24cc... 200 mph wind. It works great. Beads of water are still on the bike after a blow off, but a chamois (or clean towel) finishes the job. The leaf blower is an excellent and efficient way to dry your ride.

Bug Cleaner: Splat! - This cleaner was purchased at Miegers (about \$4.00). It is safe for my removable Fat Boy windshield and does a great job on bugs. Note: You need to get those bugs cleaned off as quickly as you can... some contain chemicals that will etch your paint and damage your windshield. Besides, bugs are harder to clean when dry. Be careful about what you use on the windshield because some are not intended for the (Lexon) plastic windshields.

Leather Conditioner: Eagle One Carnuba Leather Cream - The best leather conditioners are those that you apply with your bare hand... no petroleum products added. I apply this about one a month to my

leather seat, and a couple times a Summer for my leather riding gear. It is also used when putting the jacket, pants, chaps, gloves (four to five pair) and vest away at the end of riding season (a very sad day for me).

Leather Cleaner: Mother's Leather Cleaner - This works well for getting bugs off the leather jackets, pants, chaps, vests, gloves, etc. Spray on (pump type) and rub the cleaner into the leather with an old soft cotton sock. When dry, use the above conditioner to bring the leather back to life.

Wet Leather Conditioner: Lexol - This is used when you've been soaked. Wipe off the excess water with a soft cloth, and then apply Lexol with a dry soft cloth (old sock works well). Use enough to coat the leather, but do not saturate it... several thin coats are better than one heavy one. When the leather dries, you should apply another thin coat before using a conditioner like Eagle One.

Battery Terminals: Cyclo Battery Protector - Plumbing is not my favorite task. But, an old copper pipe cleaning brush works super for cleaning battery terminals. After the terminals are clean, apply a coat of Cyclo Battery Protector.

Liquid Tape: Electronics - Splicing wires is not difficult with the various connectors available in an electronics department, but taping them to be waterproof is practically impossible. After you've tested the connection (by running the motorcycle, etc.), apply a coat of liquid tape. It is easy to apply, and keeps the wires dry by sealing it. Read the directions for proper usage and application. Note: Once opened, the liquid tape will only last about a year.

Belt Drive: The belt is often ignored until there is a problem. Check the belt for signs of wear and damage. Clean the belt with mild soap and water when washing your bike. Towel dry and inspect.

Clean Helmet Liner: Note: Wearing a helmet is a matter of choice (in my humble opinion), in Michigan, still mandatory (law) as of February 2004. - - However, there are products advertised to "freshen" your helmet that work okay. But, a simpler and cheaper method is to use a little Ivory dish soap or Dr. Bonner's Peppermint Oil Soap with warm water applied with a soft bristle brush to clean and refresh your helmet. Note: A damp cloth rubbed around the inside does wonders every week or so. Allow the helmet to dry before use.

Clean Cycle Products on the internet at: <http://www.cleancycle.com>

Clean Cycle Products are excellent. Please read review at: <http://www.gmasw.com/clncycle.htm>

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