

“ABC Quick” Bike Check

Safe bicycling starts with a safe and well-maintained bicycle. These quick checks will take about a minute, and ensure that your bike is in safe working order:

A = AIR

Tires lose a little air each day on their own. Make sure your tires are inflated to the proper pressure before you ride. Check air pressure every couple of weeks. Often, you can't feel a tire which has lost a little pressure. If you can squeeze the tire, the air pressure is probably too low.

B = BRAKES

Squeeze the brakes to make sure the pads are not worn, and will stop the wheel from moving without applying much pressure. Have your brakes adjusted or replace the brake pads as soon as possible if either pad doesn't touch the rim.



C = CHAIN

Make sure your chain is not dried out or rusty, since it could cause sudden problems when riding. Also make sure it is not so worn or stretched that it hangs down. To check for stretching, take a ruler and check to see that the distance between the centers of link pins (see photo below) is exactly 12 inches. If the distance is more, the chain is stretched and should be replaced. If it is worn, replace it. If the chain is dry, lubricate it by using a greaseless chain lubricant. If you find stiff links in your chain, you may be able to free them up by carefully and slightly bending the chain sideways back and forth until the stiff link loosens up.



Measure for chain stretch from link pin to link pin, as shown above.



The quick release lever should be closed in the upright position, as shown above.

QUICK = QUICK RELEASES

Check your wheel quick release skewers to make sure they're closed and tight. Improperly fastening quick release skewers can allow your wheels to shift and rub against the frame of your bike, or even fall off! In an urban environment, you may want to consider using locking skewers to further deter thieves from stealing your wheels off of your bike.

WEAR YOUR HELMET

Fit and adjust your helmet correctly so that it fits snug and the straps and slides are properly adjusted. See section on HELMETS for more info. Your helmet is not technically part of your bike, but think about it like a seatbelt: it must be put on and fastened properly before you start your trip.