

Cycle Maintenance Notes

Before training begins, the instructor will check the following areas on your bicycle:

Brakes:

Brakes should 'bite' as soon as the levers are pulled, they should not travel all the way back to the handlebars. Brake blocks also need to be checked for wear and alignment. If they are not aligned properly to the wheel rim they will wear unevenly and be less efficient.

Wheels and tyres:

Whilst some road tyres are designed without, most do have some kind of tread. When the tread has almost gone it is time to get a new tyre.

Tyres should also be well inflated for use on the road. They should be hard to the touch, requiring strong pressure from thumb and fingers to make an impression (pressing the sidewalls of the tyre).

Wheels rims should be checked for buckling as this affects braking and the strength of the wheel.

Chain:

Chain tension of bicycles without derailleur gears can be corrected by loosening the rear wheel and moving it forwards or back. When the wheel is tightened up again, it should be possible to move the chain no more than the width of a pencil.

The chain should be kept well oiled; this makes for smoother, easier cycling and maximises the life of the chain.

Handlebars:

One area that is often overlooked on a maintenance check are the handlebars. These can be checked by standing with the front wheel held firmly between your legs while facing the saddle and turning the handlebars against the pressure from your legs. If the handlebars move easily, independently of the wheel, then the bolt needs tightening.

Lights:

Lights are compulsory for night riding. A rear reflector is also compulsory at all times.

Lights need constant checking, Batteries can go dead, connections can be faulty and the constant jarring of road travel can knock the lights out of alignment.

Cycle Size:

Ideally, when sitting on a bicycle, you should be just able to touch the ground with the balls of both feet at the same time. You should also be able to steer while pedalling without the handlebars knocking your knees.