

[Bicycle Maintenance 101](#)



1. Review “**Winter Storage Tips**” (available on [Mannbikecave.com](#))
2. **Spring cleaning** – Of all the best tips I can share, the most important is keeping your bike clean. Before you head out for the first time or after your ride (depending on riding conditions), clean your bike. Use a bucket of soapy water and a soft sponge to wipe down your frame and components and rinse with a small amount of clear water. DO NOT use a high pressure washer or even a strong garden hose blast, only enough water to remove any soapy residue from the wipe down. Another option is to use a product like Spray 9 or Simple Green if water is not an option. Wipe down thoroughly with a soft cloth, a magic cloth works well, to dry all areas.
3. **Tires, Tubes & Rims** – After winter storage your tires will definitely need to be inflated. To determine inflation pressures, check the sidewall of the tire. It will tell you in PSI or kPa (metric) what the correct inflation should be. No need to go to the maximum so for example, if the range is 50-70 psi, go in the middle so about 60 psi. If the tire is not holding air you will need to remove and check for tube leaks. Tube valves can be Schrader or Presta and so you will need a pump that can do both. Tire inflation rates are all over the map depending on size and style of bike. Road bikes have pressures as high as 120 psi. Fat tire bikes are as low as 15 psi. Also check the tires for any bulges or cracks, make sure all nuts and fasteners are tight. Also check for any broken or loose spokes and any excessive wobble or shimmy when the rim is spinning. Rims may be steel or aluminum and have different characteristics.
4. **Brakes** – There are various brake designs on the market. From the older cantilever, to more modern V brakes to the most current use of disc brakes. All obviously have a purpose in mind and that is to stop you. Check to see they are functioning properly with no excess dragging or rubbing on the rim or disc and that the brake pull at the handlebar is adequate. If the brakes are mechanical discs they are easy to adjust, if they are hydraulic and the pull is excessive, they will need to be bled and re-charged with the correct oil. It is also important to keep in mind that disc rotors may be steel or aluminum and this determines the pad material, either metallic or resin, if you are replacing the pads.

5. **Drive train or Group Set** – This is generally the most expensive part of your bike and also the most neglected. The system is usually Shimano or Sram and the parts are not interchangeable. These can be expensive repairs so cleaning and lubrication is very important. This area of the bike includes your front chain rings (1, 2 or 3), front derailleur (if you have one), chain, rear derailleur (5-12) freehub (cassette) or freewheel. Avoid dropping or laying your bike on the derailleur side as the derailleur adjustment will be affected and/or the derailleur hanger can be bent or broken. Misaligned derailleur's will cause poor shifting and/or chain jumping sprockets and will require knowledgeable adjustments. Chain wear can be a big deal but not easily determined without a chain measuring tool. Obvious rust or excessive wear will be visible and if neglected can result in rounding of the teeth on cassette/freewheel, resulting in an expensive replacement. Cassette/freewheel wear will happen over time and as a rule of thumb, every third chain should require a new cassette/freewheel. Dirt and grime cause excessive wear on the chain rollers and shortens the life of your chain. I clean and lubricate my chain after just about every ride depending on riding conditions and length of ride, it only takes a few minutes. DO NOT lubricate your chain with automotive lube or grease, it only attracts dirt and makes things worse. Use a good quality dry or wet bicycle specific lubricant (from your LBS)

6. **Cables & Housing** – Cables do stretch over time and eventually need to be replaced. Brake cables are vertical strands of wire whereas shift cables are horizontal wraps and the two are not interchangeable. Cracked housing results in excessive cable friction and kinks or tight loops should be avoided. I also don't like to see frayed ends on cables as this usually means the cable is getting pretty old. Barrel adjusters on either one or both ends of the cable control tension and can be adjusted as the cable ages and stretches.

7. **Pedals, Seats, Seat Posts** – Generally check they are tight with no binding, squeaking or creaking. Usually, a sign of looseness or dryness that can be easily corrected with a shot of silicone lubricant.

8. **Questions ?**
Contact: Don Mann (403) 620-3036 or Email: mannbikecave@gmail.com