

8. Chain

Chain Care

Your chain should always be oiled. The chain should be cleaned before oiling. The chain should be dried and oiled subsequent to riding in the rain.

Normally it is sufficient just to pull the chain through a cloth that does not fluff. Excess oil should be removed from the chain in the same manner.

Never put too much oil on the chain otherwise it could splash onto the wheel rims when riding. This will reduce the braking effect immensely.

If the chain is not running smoothly it may have a stiff link. Hold the chain so that the stiff link is between your hands and bend the chain backwards and forwards until the stiff link is loosened.

It is also possible that with new chains the link that closes the chain may be stiff, if this be the case then loosen it as described above.

Chain Tension

In general it is only possible to adjust chain tension on bicycles without gears or with hub gears. The rear derailleur tensions the chain on bikes with derailleur gears.

Chain tension can be adjusted by moving the wheel in the rear dropouts.

Before adjustments are carried out one should find the position where the tension is at its highest. Due to manufacturing tolerances in the drive parts chain tension will vary a little when new.

The more wear and tear the greater the difference in chain tension.

If this difference is so great that even if correctly adjusted the chain still jumps from the sprocket then the chain should be replaced.

Turn the cranks gradually and note how the tension changes. Once you have found the position where the tension is at its highest adjustments should be made so that the chain can be moved 5mm upwards and downwards.

The chain is tensioned by loosening the nuts on the rear wheel, with bikes with back pedal brakes also the brake bracket or the connection to the frame.

On bikes with hub gears one may have to remove the gearbox.

Once you have pulled the wheel back and adjusted the chain tension you can retighten the axle nuts (torque 30Nm).

Chain Wear

Bicycle chains with derailleur gears should be replaced every 1500 – 2000 kilometres. By this time the chain has lengthened so much that the chain and sprocket teeth gauges no longer match. The chain should still be replaced even if this is not obvious when riding.

Further use will cause premature wear and tear to the sprockets.

With bicycles either without gears or with hub gears one will notice increasing wear and tear by the difference in the chain tension because the difference increases. If this difference is so great that even if correctly adjusted the chain still jumps from the sprocket then the chain should be replaced.