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## Basic Maintenance Checks

### P.O.W.D.E.R.S

Welcome to our basic maintenance page. Here we cover maintenance that will hopefully, help you to get to know your motorcycle better, keep you safe and the motorcycle economic and trouble free. These are covered in training with us, or you can always pop into P&H for any more advice.

For safety, remember to have the motorcycle on a firm, level surface, using the centre stand to help prevent it from falling over, and if the engine is hot be mindful of touching the engine, exhaust etc.

One of the mnemonics that we use to help us on a daily basis is POWDERS....

#### **P - Petrol:**

Have you got enough petrol to get to a petrol station?

Motorcycles have difference petrol indicators. Most have ON/Off/RESERVE taps, and/or fuel gauges. Unfortunately, most fuel gauges are not 100% as they change as the motorcycle is leant, say, around corners or on a slope. In some motorcycles the sensor is low in the tank, so they indicate that you have a full tank for miles and then suddenly fall at a rapid speed!

One tip is to fill the motorcycle to full and reset the mileage. Then ride the motorcycle until you run out with the tap set to ON, obviously you still have the reserve to get you to the nearest petrol station! You now know how many miles you can do to a tank (this may be a little different if doing, say, motorway to congestion riding). Therefore, each time you tank up, reset the mileage and you have a second confirmation on how much petrol you have in the tank. This is very help if the motorway sign states 'Services in 2 miles, next services in 25 miles', as you will know if you will make the second services or not.

#### **O - Oil:**

Engine Oil Level

Running the engine without sufficient oil can cause damage to the engine.

Depending on your motorcycle, you could have a sight glass or dipstick. You will have to check your manual to confirm whether the engine should be hot or cold, and the type of motorcycle oil you will need to purchase.

## 2 Stroke Oil Level

Most do not come with an indicator, as they just need to be filled to the top. So you may have to just unscrew the lid and look inside! Again, check the manual to confirm what type of 2 stroke motorcycle oil you will need to purchase.

## Transmission Oil

If your bike has a separate gear box or shaft drive instead of chain. There could be an oil plug or dipstick, so you would need to refer to your manual.

## Hydraulic Oil for Brake

As the brake pad wears, the brake oil level will slowly drop. The reservoir will be on the right handle bar for the front brake, and if you also have a disc brake on the rear, it is normally on the right hand side of the bike just before the rear wheel, or under the seat. There is no adjustment, but if the level is low, check the pads, you may need to book it into your local garage. If the level suddenly drops then check for leaks.

## Clutch systems

Similar to the brake fluid, the reservoir will be on the left handle bar above the clutch. If this is low, book it into your local garage.

## **W - Water:**

### Radiator level

Some motorcycles are air cooled and therefore do not have a radiator. If your motorcycle is fitted with a radiator you will need to check the level, please note that some reservoirs are under the seat. Also, a mixture of antifreeze with distilled water to cover you in the winter month, the percentage of antifreeze to water will be in your manual.

### Battery levels

There are two types of batteries; the standard battery or sealed and maintenance free. The standard battery will have levels on the side to indicate if it will need to be topped up with distilled water.

## **D - Drivetrain & Damage:**

Poor adjustment and lubrication could greatly reduce the life of the chain. Referring to your manual, check the slackness of the chain between the two sprockets, seeing how much vertical movement you have.

Adjustment is a matter of moving the rear wheel backwards, making sure that you keep the wheel alignment. Most bikes have marks on each side of the swing arm for the alignment.

Lubricate with a good chain grease, with the bike on the centre stand, slowly spin the wheel making sure that you spray between in links and not over the back wheel! This will also give you a chance to check for damage. If you do not have a centre stand, it's a question of spraying the chain the move the bike forward, spray again and repeat.

Check the teeth of the sprocket making sure that they are not overly worn or are hooked over like waves.

**E - Electrics:**

Work you way through all the lights, noting that some bikes may have to have their engine running. Headlight dip & main, rear light & both brakes, number plate light, indicators, horn, reflectors all clean working & properly aligned.

**R - Rubber:**

Check tyres for cuts, screws, lumps or bumps, damage & pressure regularly.

New bikes have the pressure written on the swing arm, if not check you manual and write it on a sticker and stick it underneath the seat. Pressures could be different if riding with a pillion and are normally checked when the tyres are cold, check manual.

Tread depth should not be down to 1mm, three quarters across the tyre, anywhere in the tyre. This can be checked with the tread wear indicators on the tyre or with a gauge.

**Steering, Suspension, Static Brake test:**

Smooth movement in steering can be checked by putting the bike on its centre stand, leaning on the back to lift the front wheel, then moving the steering full lock to full lock.

Suspension needs to be correctly set up and adjusted if carrying light or heavy loads (pillion), checking your manual for adjustments. It can also be checked by holding the front brake and pumping the front up and down checking that the action is smooth and there are no leaks.

Check all brake lines for wear & leaks, feel for pressure at levers.

