

Pre-Ride Checklist

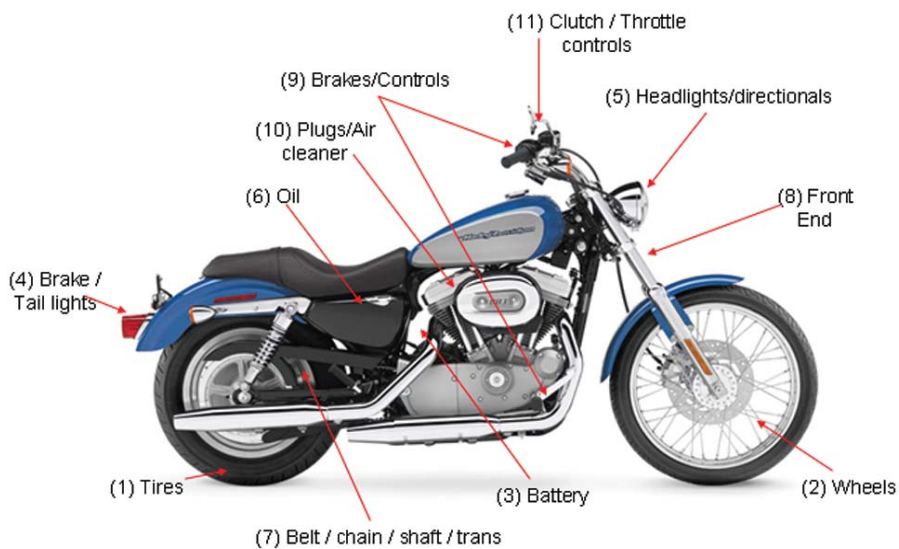
by Wally Wersching

I ride all year but I know that some people don't ride during the winter. That first ride in the spring can be an adventure if you don't completely check the bike before you ride. Sometimes gremlins take over the bike when it sits for any length of time. The list below will help chase the gremlins away so that your first spring ride won't be your last.

1. Check the air pressure in both tires - inflate to the mfr's recommendation then check for cracks, and dry rot.
2. Check your wheels. If laced wheels, check for loose spokes. If they are cast, check for cracks.
3. Check the battery. If it needs a charge, charge slowly with a trickle charger. Charging too fast can warp the plates, and destroy the battery. The best thing to do is buy a battery tender that will keep the battery at full charge all winter.
4. Ensure that all the back lights work - tail, stop and both directionals.
5. Ensure that all the front lights work - headlight both beams, and both directionals.
6. Check the oil. It also a good idea to change the oil if you didn't change it before storing.
7. Check the belt or chain for the proper tension. Oil the chain. If shaft drive, check fluid level. Check transmission fluid too.
8. Check the front end for excessive play, leaks, and any other abnormalities.
9. Check the brake fluid levels, and ensure that the lever and foot control are working properly. If mechanical brakes, check adjustment.

10. Remove the plugs, clean and check gap - or replace with new ones. Check the air cleaner element - clean or replace when necessary.

11. Check that the clutch and throttle controls work smoothly. Lube cables if necessary. After all the checking is done, take it out for a short ride to ensure that everything is working right. Even with all these precautions, the one thing that will take time to adjust is you. You haven't ridden for a few months, and your reflexes are not what they were last fall. Take it slow the first few days until your mind



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