

How To Get Your Motorcycle Ready For Spring

BY DAVID J. JENSEN

As the winter starts winding down and the days get longer, you're probably getting eager to don that leather vest and your motorcycle chaps and get out on that first spring road trip. If you live in a place where the winter months are spent under a blanket of snow, then your motorcycle and motorbike gear has likely been sitting dormant for a few months. Just as it is hard for you to put your bike away for winter, the inactivity can be equally taxing on your bike. Rather than revving it up and hitting the road at the first sign of warm weather, you will enjoy safer and more rewarding rides as well as prolong the life of your motorcycle if you properly prepare your bike for the riding season.

A lot of what you do to get your bike and motorbike gear ready for spring depends on what you did to prepare it for winter storage. Your owner's manual has a check list of tasks to complete before you store it. Performing these tasks will make your spring preparation



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easier and less expensive. You can do much of the maintenance yourself or have a qualified mechanic prepare the engine for use.

During the winter, condensation can build up in your fuel tank and carburetor.

This can cause rust and corrosion in your fuel system. Before you put your bike in storage, you probably filled the tank and turned off the petcock (if it has one). Before you turn on the petcock, disconnect the fuel line and drain all the

fuel from the tank. Clean the fuel filter and inspect the tank and the carburetor float bowl for rust or corrosion. Replace the fuel line and then fill it with fresh fuel.

If you changed your oil and filter before storing your bike, the oil should be fine. Check the oil to make sure it's clean and free of moisture. Water gives oil a milky appearance which can eventually cause corrosion. If moisture did get into your oil, change it again and replace the filter—even if you changed it right before storing it.

This is a good time to put fresh fluid into the brake master cylinder and check the condition of your brake pads. If they worn or thin, replace them before you go riding very far. Also check the lubrication and the condition of the drive-line, chain, and sprockets. Check and change your fork oil if needed then look for any leaks wherever there is fluid—even minor leaks should be fixed.

Whether you do your own maintenance or use a mechanic, make sure you check the plugs, air filter, carb synch,

wheel bearing, spoke tension, tire pressure, and make sure all plugs and fasteners are tight.

Finally, washing and applying a fresh coat of wax to your bike not only keeps it looking good, it can also prevent rust and corrosion from occurring. Thoroughly clean and dry everywhere moisture accumulates.

In addition to your bike, you might want to give your motorbike gear, leather vests, and motorcycle chaps some attention. Properly caring for your leather maintains that classic motorcycle leather look and feel as well as extends the life of your apparel.

If you take the time to properly prepare your motorcycle for riding after storing it, you will enjoy safe and worry-free season of riding. Regular maintenance will also prolong the life of your motorcycle.

About the Author: David Jensen is a content contributor for jacketsforbikers. To view and comment on this article, see www.jacketsforbikers.com.

10 Ways to Drive Green Lawn Mower Repairs: They Are Inevitable



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In addition to altering driving habits, shopping for a hybrid car is another way for motorists to keep driving while reducing their negative impact on the environment.

(MS) — The millions of the vehicles on the road have a tremendous impact on the environment. Vehicle exhaust, fuel, and the fluids that are used in and drained from cars and trucks all impact the environment in their unique ways.

There are ways to make "greener" choices regarding vehicle choice, maintenance, and driving habits, however. Here are some eco-friendly tips to consider.

1. Shop hybrid or clean diesel: If you are in the market for a new vehicle, choose a hybrid model, which will be less reliant on fuel, making it a smarter choice. Clean diesel vehicles burn fuel more efficiently and produce less waste at the tailpipe. So if hybrids aren't your choice, a diesel may be another option.

2. Look for green materials: Many automakers are equipping vehicles with recycled components. There are also options to skip the leather interior in favor of plant-based materials that may offer a lower impact on the planet.

3. Clean-up at the car wash: Today's commercial car wash outfits generally use recycled and filtered water to clean the bevy of cars that come through. When washing a car at home by hand, you may use more water than is required and flush detergents and soiled water into storm sewers, which filter out into waterways. Pulling up to the car wash is a greener choice.

4. Recycle motor oil: Oil and lube establishments have contracts with disposal services to cart away used motor oil and other car fluids so they can be properly recycled or disposed of. If you're doing an oil change at home, bottle up the used oil and take it to a facility that can recycle the oil. Also, automotive experts now say that vehicles can go longer between oil changes than the once recommended 3,000 miles. This will save on the amount of oil you need to purchase and the amount that needs to be recycled.

5. Smaller may be better: The mantra "bigger is better" doesn't always apply. In terms of environmental impact, a smaller vehicle could be the better option. Smaller cars — ones with lighter curb weight and fewer cylinders, for example — will burn less fuel. Think about whether you need a seven-passenger vehicle with third-row seat or four-wheel drive. These options can add weight to a vehicle and increase fuel consumption. There are some manufacturers that recog-

nize a driver's desire for horsepower. Some engines are equipped to turn off cylinders when they are not needed, and simply fire them up when more power is desired.

6. Vary your route: Traffic doesn't just get you aggravated, it can impact the environment, too. Stop-and-go traffic reduces fuel economy and puts more wear and tear on a vehicle. Use a GPS system to figure out alternative routes to and from work or school that will reduce stress and environmental impact.

7. Slow and steady: Aim for a constant speed while driving and stick to it. Just 10 miles over the speed limit can eat up fuel. Pumping the accelerator sends more fuel into the engine. Use cruise control whenever possible on the highway.

8. Close the windows: If you'll be driving over 50 mph, close the windows. Driving with the windows open at highway speeds increases aerodynamic drag on the vehicle and lowers fuel economy.

9. Keep tires inflated: Make sure your tires are inflated to the recommended psi. This improves fuel economy by reducing rolling resistance and friction. Also, make sure tires are properly aligned so that they don't fight against one another on the road and waste fuel.

10. Lighten your load: Is your vehicle serving as an extra closet or storage unit? Excess weight could be costing you more at the pump. Take out extras you don't need from the trunk.

A few easy tips will have you driving greener instantly.

BY JEFF CASMER

Regardless of the type of lawn mower a person owns it will have to go through one or more lawn mower repairs at some point of its life, even top manufacturers and models that worked perfectly in the beginning will require a tune up of at least one part.

One can prevent serious lawn mower repairs if maintenance is done on the machine regularly. In most cases lawn mowers repairs are due to a lack of attention to the machine.

But by doing maintenance checks every winter before storage and every spring before use as well as cleaning the underneath of the mower by scraping it and using an air compressor to clean the engine, air filter and carburetor you can avoid a number of repairs.

Prevention is often better the cure. Because lawn mower repairs can be costly, maintaining your machine is far more cost effective than neglecting it and then running out to purchase

new parts.

That said, nearly all mowers will need a repair at some point. This may be a small repair such as replacing the blade or larger like repairing the small engine that powers the lawn mower. This may include replacing a clogged fuel filter, which is a common reason for why the lawn mower won't start, stalls or dies during use.

Lawn mower repairs are often tricky for the average user because in most cases the actual problem does not show up in the part that needs to be repaired but rather somewhere else in the machines.

For instance if your spark plug needs to be replaced it could be because there are snags in the carburetor. In this case, replacing the spark plug may help but you will also have to get the carburetor looked at. So lawn owners are often playing doctor to their lawn mowers as they try to diagnose the disease behind the symptoms.

Looking at every symptom or

problem and trying to decipher what could be the cause is the best way to get to the root of the problem. Consider the problem. Is the problem that the lawn mower vibrates during use? Is it that it won't start?

Often, a lawn mower that will not start may be out of fuel or the ration of the fuel mix may be incorrect. By ruling out each cause related to starting the mower you can find the solution.

However, the lawn mower owner may not be able to get to the bottom of the issue or they may find, during the process, that the mower needs a serious repair. In each case it is best to call in a professional.

Professional lawn mower

repairs, not only fix major repairs but they also help lawn mower owners figure what is wrong with their lawn mower. The owner can then get some quotes on the repair cost and determine if fixing it is the best option or if the lawn mower has seen better days and a new mower is in order.

Lawn mowers are essential for keeping a healthy lawn. And repairing your lawn mower can help prolong its life.

About the Author: Jeff Casmer is a lawn mower expert and the owner of Lawn Mower Repair, a website dedicated to lawn mowers and lawn keepers.

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