



BASIC MOUNTAIN BIKE MAINTENANCE GUIDE

Coach Tammy Lee // MTB Workshops for Women Series // gofitlife.ca





HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

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WORKSHOPS FOR WOMEN

I have been coaching women in endurance sports and fitness since 2000. In 2016, I decided to become a PMBIA certified mountain bike coach due to my own personal passion for MTB and desire to help women get on wheels. Since then, I have helped many women build the skills and confidence they need to truly enjoy their ride. Life is better on a mountain bike!

Included in this guide is a checklist, a detailed description of each, and a log sheet

Checklist - this is a quick run-through of things you can do to look after your ride. Print it with your log and check off what you do each time you service your own bike.

Details - a simple description of the basics, nothing fancy. If something is unclear, email me.

Log sheet - use this to keep track of maintenance, what you did (checks), what needs attention, and any other notes such as a component or tool that you need to purchase.

Basic tools - you should have a range of Allen keys (Hex keys) especially 4, 5, & 6. Clean rags, a water bucket, cleaning solution specifically for bikes, bicycle chain oil and grease. It is best to use products designed specifically for bicycles.

Check your local bike shop or search online.

MTB BASIC MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

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frame



brake pads



crank arms



rear cassette



pedals



front rings



tires



jockey wheels



rims



chain



spokes



adjust brakes



hubs



seat / handlebar



rotors



tire pressure

MAINTENANCE LOG

CHECKS: _____

NEEDS ATT: _____

NOTES: _____ DATE: _____

CHECKS: _____

NEEDS ATT: _____

NOTES: _____ DATE: _____

CHECKS: _____

NEEDS ATT: _____

NOTES: _____ DATE: _____

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FRAME

Remove your wheels and clean the entire frame of your bike. To remove your wheels, make sure you are in the smallest cog in the back and the biggest ring in the front. If you are running a 1x system, you will not have to worry about the front ring. This is to ensure that when you put your rear wheel back on, you can line up the chain on the cassette with greater ease.

Once your wheels are off, set them aside and give your frame a really good scrub. It is best to use bike-specific cleaners, such as Muck-Off.

CRANK ARMS

Same as the frame, give them a good wipe down. Also, check to see if your crankset has any play. If it does, you may need it serviced.

PEDALS

Once or twice a year, I like to take my pedals off and regrease them. This helps to keep them from seizing up. Otherwise, just clean them with your solution.

TIRES

It might seem like a waste of time to clean your tires but it is not. In fact, this is a great time to check for damage such as wear on the tread, cracks, tears in the sidewalls and punctures. Obviously, if you find damage or a lot of wear the tire will need to be replaced.

RIMS

Starting where the stem is, wipe down the whole rim on one side, then in between each spoke, and then flip the tire over and get the other side. Easy peasy.

Give the rim a good inspection for dents and cracks. Replace if necessary.

SPOKES

A tedious task but an important one. Not only do you clean each spoke but this is a great time to check to see if any of them are broken or loose. If this is the case, a repair is necessary as this will cause your wheel to be out of true and affect bike handling. It will feel "off."

HUBS

While it's in a hard-to-reach area, the middle of your wheel, it's good to take the time to wipe them down. Good thing it doesn't take that long.

ROTORS

Use specific brake cleaner, not soap or any greasy type of product. Follow the directions on the bottle.

If you don't have a brake cleaner, you can do what I do. I take rubbing alcohol and put it on a clean, lint-free cloth, and then wipe the rotor edges down. I do this until all the dirt is gone and no longer appears on my cloth.

BRAKE PADS

If your brakes are not working that well, feel "weak" when you use them while riding or doing a lot of squeaking, you might need to replace the brake pads. It is actually easier than it sounds. You can find a clip from the Global Mountain Biking Network on YouTube on how to change your pads. They also have more "how-tos" on this topic.

REAR CASSETTE

I take my cassette off my wheel to clean it but that requires more tools. In my workshop, I showed the ladies a quick method.

You want to apply cleaner to the edge of a rag and then just floss it back and forth between each cog until the cogs come clean. It's a bit time-consuming but your bike will love you for this. A lot of dirt and mud gather up in between the cogs and so cleaning them will help preserve the life of your gears and drivetrain. Also, your bike will shift better when the gears are free of debris.

FRONT RING(S)

Depending on whether you are running a 1x, 2x or 3x will depend on how many rings you have. Regardless, clean what you got. Wipe down the teeth, front and back.

JOCKEY WHEELS

They may be little but they are mighty. Make sure you give these two little wheels some love.

CHAIN

To clean the chain, I suggest putting your clean wheels back onto your clean bike. It's easier to clean your chain this way.

Spray a clean rag with some chain cleaner. Lightly grab the chain, very loose, and backpedal so the chain runs through your hand. You should see the cloth get very dirty.

Choose a new clean section on the cloth and repeat again. Keep doing this until the chain is clean. If this is your first time, it might take a while depending on how dirty your chain is.

Another option is to scrub the chain in different sections until it's completely clean.

If you have a chain brush, by all means, use it. Just cover up your bike frame and any parts nearby so they do not get sprayed with grease and dirt coming from your brush.

ADJUST BRAKES

Once you put your wheels back on, lift up the front of the bike and give your front tire a spin. If it slows down quickly or seems like it is dragging or rubbing, you may need to adjust your brakes.

I teach this in my workshop but it's tough to explain. Visit GMBN on YouTube to see how to get this task done.

SEAT / SADDLE

Clean your seat underneath and check for damage. Make sure it's not loose either.

HANDLEBAR

Of course, you can wipe down your handlebar and give it a good inspection. Check to see if the headset is loose, brake levers and gear shifters are evenly and comfortably placed. All these things can be adjusted to fit you better.

TIRE PRESSURE

Last but not least, tire pressure. It's not uncommon for a new mountain biker to show up to one of my rides with 60 PSI in their tires. That's because it says "60 PSI" on the actual tire but this is not what you want to use.

Tire pressure is very dependant on the size of the tire, the terrain you will ride, trail conditions, temperature, rider weight, riding style, suspension, and so on.

One of my favourite guides on this topic for mountain bike tires is written by Tom Mavrin on BikeRadar.com - [CLICK HERE](#).

I can't stress how important it is to be riding with the right tire pressure on any type of bike. It will greatly impact your ride. Every time I head out, I always check my pressure before I leave my house. It's a habit worth developing.

TEST IT OUT

After you're all done, and you ticked off all the boxes, you will want to finish up by running through the gears. I suggest hopping on your bike and give it a little spin around your backyard. Before you do that, check the wheels to make sure you put them back on tight. Then hop on, shift through the gears, use the brakes, bounce up and down, and see if it feels right.

So there you have it - a basic mountain bike maintenance guide for women. If you download and use this guide, I would love to know what you think.

Email: tammy@gofitlife.ca

Also, if you find a mistake or have some information you want to contribute, please do so.

Hope to hear from you. Happy shredding!

Coach Tammy Lee



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