



#### CONTACT BASICS

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#### THE RIDES

**Tour du Canada**  
Vancouver - St. John's

**Tour TransCanada**  
Vancouver - St. John's

**Tour Arctic**  
Vancouver - Inuvik

**Tour Atlantic**  
Halifax - Baddeck

**Tour Pacific**  
Vancouver - Calgary

**The BiQue Ride**  
Toronto - Montreal

**The By-Cycle Ride**  
Toronto - Ottawa

**Cabot Trail**  
Moncton - Cape Breton

**Canol Road**  
Southern Yukon

**Erie Shores**  
Windsor - Niagara

**Haida Gwaii**  
Vancouver - Sandspit

**Icefields Parkway**  
Kamloops - Calgary

**Niagara Vineyards**  
Hamilton - Niagara

**P'tit Train du Nord**  
Loop from Ottawa

**Rocky Mountain**  
Loop from Calgary

**Simcoe Circle**  
Loop from Barrie

**Tour Vert**  
Montreal - Quebec City

**Voyageur Route**  
Ottawa - Quebec City

**Cycle Canada Century Ride**  
Early season Warm-up

## Time for a Spring Cleaning!

Roll up your sleeves and let's get the bike ready for summer.

Of course, you could go to your local bike shop, where the standard rate for a tune-up is about seventy bucks. We have a directory of shops at [cyclecanada.com/Directory/](http://cyclecanada.com/Directory/). In springtime, be prepared for the person behind the counter to say "Take a number." It's like tax time; everyone waits until the last minute.

If you are back to rolling up your sleeves, here are basic supplies:

- Gloves — The ones you find in supermarket bulk food areas work just fine; if you want something like you see at cop show crime scenes, the big drugmarts have them.
- Cleaning fluid — Canadian Tire and other automotive supply shops will have a range of degreasers.
- Rags — a great use for forlorn single socks that turn up after laundry day.
- Old tooth brush — time for a new one and use the old one to reach those nooks and crannies where grit builds up.

### Cleaning Basics

Most people give their bike a lick and a promise as they go through the season. A spring clean is time to make good on those promises. It's basic maintenance plus a thorough inspection of all the components. Depending on what you are cleaning, you will use different cleaning materials. For the drive train — derailleurs, gears and chain — you will want a degreaser. Use a spray bottle; spray a rag, then wipe to ensure that you don't use excessive amounts. Ordinary dish soap and water works for road grime that builds up on pedals, brakes, tires, rims, and the frame. Don't use a pressure washer. Be careful not to get water or degreaser into axles with bearings — wheel hubs, pedals, bottom bracket and headset.

**Note to Self:** This is also a good time to check out mechanic courses. Many shops offer basic mechanic courses that will help you tune up your bike and maintain it when you are on the road. Alternatively, there are YouTube channels specializing in bike maintenance, repair and general riding techniques. GCN, referenced in Handlebar Tape on the checklist, is one such resource.

**GO THE NEXT PAGE FOR A SPRING CLEANING CHECKLIST.**





## A Cyclist's Spring Cleaning Checklist

**Nuts and bolts:** Is everything tight? Check all but don't over-tighten any nut, bolt or quick release. (Remember the old saying — Righty Tightly, Lefty Loosey.)

**Brakes:** Check the braking surface on rims, or discs if you have disc brakes. If you have tiny grooves scoured into that surface, there is a problem with the brake pads. Examine the pads for wear. Most pads have a pattern on the side that touches the rim and if that pattern has worn away the pads need replacing. Some pads have a "wear line" to tell you when it's time. Check that pads on opposite sides connect with the rim at the same time. Check that there is a slight toe-in so that the front of the pad touches the rim first. If pads squeak, they probably need replacing.

**Wheels and Gears:** With the bike on a stand, spin each wheel while watching the space between rim and brake pad. If you have a noticeable wobble, the wheel is out of alignment. If you don't have experience with truing a wheel, it is a job best left to a mechanic at your local bike shop. While the bike is on a stand, shift through the full range of gears to be sure you have crisp shifts from gear to gear. Again, if you are not confident in making adjustments, go to a mechanic.

**Chain:** Look at the chain. Is it slack, stretched or worn. If there are any damaged links, you should see a wobble in the chain when shifting through the gears. Mechanics have gauges that measure chain stretch and your local bike shop can do that check quickly.

**Pedals:** Spin the pedals. Do they spin smoothly? Any noises? While you're at it, check your shoe cleats for wear and clean out accumulated grit from last season.

**Tires:** Check for cuts in the sidewall. If there is a flaking on the sidewall, that is a sign of structural weakness. Check the tread for bald spots. If you have been riding a trainer throughout the winter, you should have put a heavier tire on the back and it now needs to be swapped.

**Cables:** If you are having trouble shifting or braking, it might mean that your cable need to be either tightened or replaced. They do stretch over time and need periodic adjustments.

**Handlebar Tape:** Is the tape loose, fraying or generally looking like it has seen better days? Replacing bar tape is a great way to freshen up your bike. For instructions on taping handlebars go to [www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8PqH7bltJQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8PqH7bltJQ). That tutorial is from the Global Cycling Network on YouTube.

**Tool Kit:** Check to see if anything used last year needs to be replaced. Is the glue in the patch kit dried out and do you need more patches? Check spare tubes, tire levers and your pump.