

# Get going

## with Sustrans

# Check your bike is safe to ride

The M check is a simple way to make sure your bike is safe to ride.

**FILM** This information sheet should be used in conjunction with the Sustrans film 'Check your bike is safe to ride – a how-to guide' available at [tinyurl.com/safetoride](http://tinyurl.com/safetoride)

## Activity instructions

### 1 Check your rear wheel is tightly fitted and the quick-release lever is secure in the closed position

Not all wheels will have quick-release levers. If wheel is not quick release, check that the nuts on both sides of the wheel are secure.

### 2 Check spokes are of equal tension and not loose

Pluck each spoke with your finger. The sound from each spoke should be very similar.

### 3 Check if there is enough air in your tyre

If the tyre is soft, then attach your pump to the valve and pump up.

**Note:** There are two types of valve fitting – Presta (long and thin), and Schrader (thicker and slightly shorter). Recommended tyre pressure is usually written somewhere on the tyre.

### 4 Check the tyre to make sure it's not worn

There are many types of tyre. Look for bald patches, cracks or inconsistencies.

### 5 Check your seat post isn't loose and that you haven't exceeded the limit marked on the seat post

Use an allen key to tighten the seat post clamp. Ensure the seat post is secure by giving it another check once you have tightened the clamp.

### 6 Check that your chain is clean and oiled

Keeping your chain clean and oiled is important for the smooth running of your bike. **Note:** Don't use too much oil as this will pick up more dirt and make the chain more difficult to clean.

### 7 Check that your pedals spin smoothly and that your cranks are on tight, spin smoothly and don't creak

### 8 Check there are bar-end plugs at the end of your handlebars

### 9 Check that your front wheel and stem do not move independently and that your handlebar clamp bolts are tight

Perform this check by standing in front of the bike, holding the front wheel between your knees and twisting the handlebars. You can prevent any movement by tightening the stem bolts and the handlebar clamp with an allen key.

## What you need

- A bike pump
- A set of allen keys



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## Check your bike is safe to ride (continued)

### 10 Check if there is any rocking or clicking in the headset

Perform this check by firmly grasping the head tube with one hand and applying the front brake with the other hand. This will steady the front of the bike so that you can shake the headset to establish any rocking or clicking in the bearings.

### 11 Check that the front and rear brakes are working properly

If the brake lever pulls against the handlebar grip, the brake cable needs adjusting. This is done by loosening the brake cable bolt, pulling the cable tighter and tightening the bolt again.

Both sides of the brake mechanism should move when the brake is applied. If this is not happening, turn the small adjustor screw on the stationary side until both sides are moving again. Most brakes have these adjustor screws.

The brake blocks must pull flat to the wheel rim. If this is not the case, use an allen key to adjust the block to the correct position.

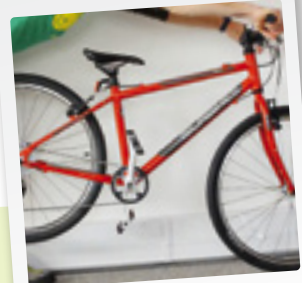
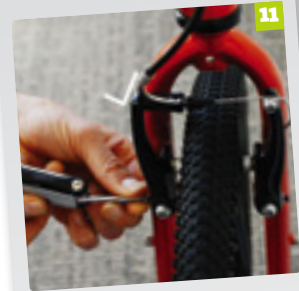
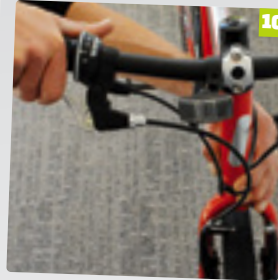
Finally, check the front brake by applying the brake and pushing the bike forwards. Check the back brake by applying the brake and pulling the bike backwards.

### 12 Check the frame for any cracks or damage

Pay particular attention to the area around head tube.

### 13 Check the front wheel

Repeat the rear wheel check.



**Tip**



If you are unsure about the safety of your bike, visit your local bike shop.

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[www.sustrans.org.uk/change-your-travel](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/change-your-travel)

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