

# New Jersey Bicycling Manual



## Quick Maintenance Checks

Major maintenance can be left to the professionals, but there are things you should always check before you get on your bike and ride off.

**Air Pressure** - Check your tire pressure, preferably with a pressure gauge for accuracy. If your tire is not up to the recommended pressure (imprinted on the side wall of the tire), add air. If you don't have a gauge, squeeze the tire hard or push it against a hard surface or curb. If you can significantly deform it, add air.

**Tires** - While rotating each wheel slowly, look for cuts or bulges. If you see any, replace the tire. If the valve stem is crooked, let out the air and reposition the valve stem so it is straight (you may have to remove the tire to do this). Remove any debris or glass stuck to the tire by spinning the wheel while holding a cloth against it.

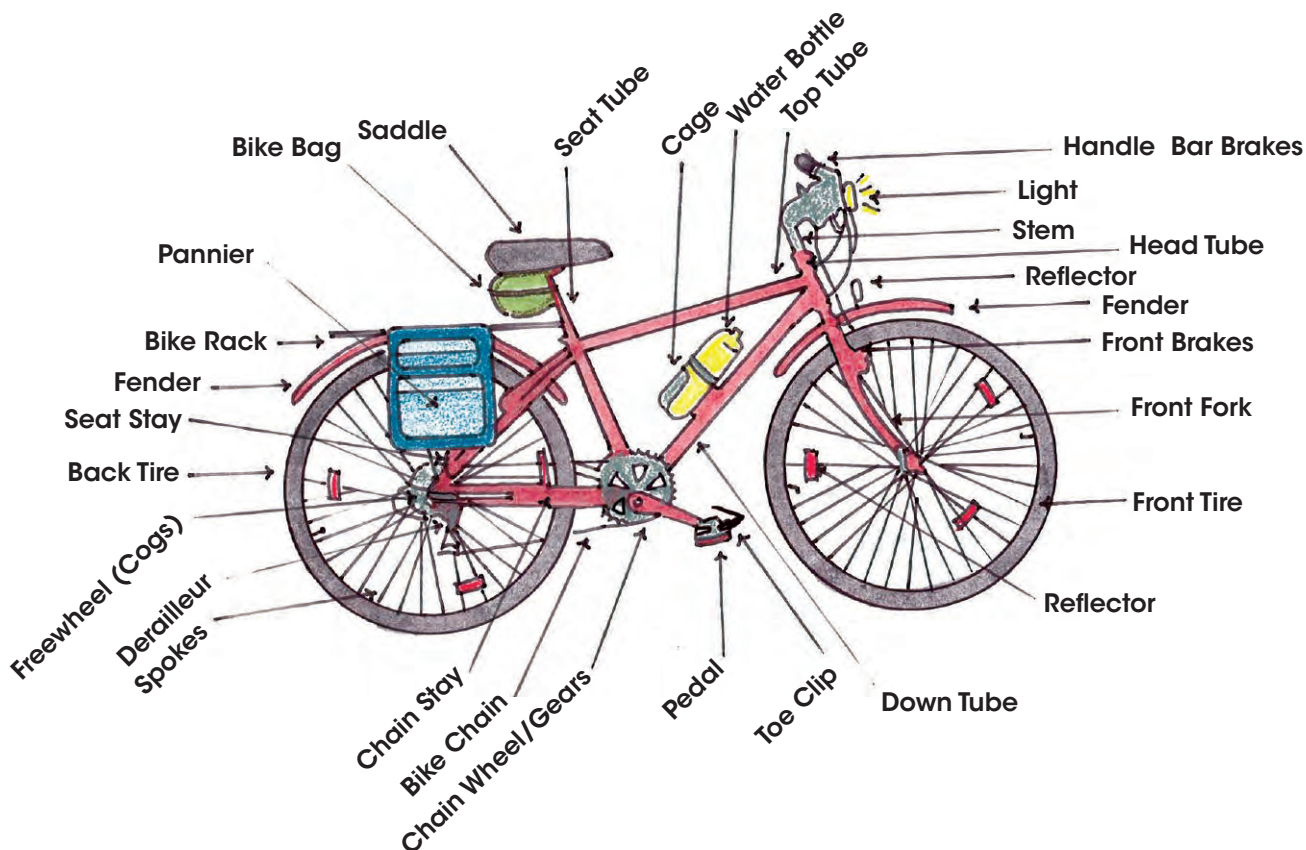
**Wheels** - Slowly spin each wheel to make sure it doesn't wobble or rub against the frame or brake pads. If it does, a simple readjustment may solve the problem. If not, you may need to have your wheel trued. (This should be done by an experienced mechanic).



Checking Tire Pressure



Checking Tire for Damage



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**Brake** - Lift each wheel, spin it and apply the brakes. If you can squeeze the brake handle all the way to the handlebar or if the brake pads don't evenly and firmly contact the rim (and only the rim - not the tire) your brakes need to be adjusted. Similarly, if you engage the brake and push the bike hard against and along the pavement, and you can't make the tires skid, the brakes need to be adjusted.

**Chain** - Check the chain. If it is dry or links are "frozen," spray the chain using a spray lubricant while rotating the pedal backwards. Then wipe off the excess lubricant by grabbing the bottom of the chain with a rag and rotating the pedal backwards. You can remove grit and grime from your chain the same way.

**Gears** - After mounting the bike and starting to ride, but before you ride off, shift through all gears. If the chain rubs against the derailleur cage, won't shift into all gears or jumps gears, or if the shifter sticks, then your derailleur or cable needs to be adjusted and/or lubed.

**Seat and Handlebars** - While holding your front wheel firmly, try to rotate the handlebars side to side, and while holding the frame firmly try to rotate the saddle. If they move, they need to be tightened.

**Nuts and Bolts** - Grasp the neck of the handlebar stem, lift the front of the bike off the ground a couple of inches and let it drop to the pavement. If you hear something rattle, tighten it.



Checking for Loose Parts