

# Tips on Cleaning Your Bike After a Ride

---

/  
Wednesday, November 11, 2015

---



Cleaning your bike's engine after a ride does more than keep it looking great -- it helps maintain the value of your motorcycle in case you ever want to sell it. Keep in mind, if you wouldn't want to buy it for top dollar because it hasn't been maintained, neither will anyone else. This need for immediate cleaning is especially valid if your bike has any small oil leaks or if you get caught riding in the rain. It can be tempting to put your bike in the garage with a plan to clean it later, especially if it was a long ride and you're a little tired, but you really shouldn't put it off. It's easy to take care of these engine-cleaning basics that help maintain your ride, and your bike is worth the effort.

## Wipe the Motorcycle Tank Down

If you got caught in the rain, it's a good idea to use a soft cloth or chamois to wipe off the tank, side covers and handlebars as well as any other exposed chrome while you're waiting on your bike's

engine to cool a bit. Note, however, that if there is grit or road dirt on the paint, do not wipe before washing properly it because wiping can scratch your paint if there's anything gritty on it.

If it's just rain water and not gritty road dirt, wiping prevents water spotting -- which can pit the surface of the paint -- and helps keep rust from starting on the chrome. Pay special attention to the small crevices where water can pool and give them a good swipe with the corner of the cloth to soak up the water.

## Soft-Bristled Brush for Motorcycle Engine Cleaning

If oil leaks onto the side of the engine, or if rain water splashes there, the moisture can cause dirt to build up into a thick goo in the fins on the side of the engine. A toothbrush is the ideal size for removing that built-up goo. Use a soft-bristled brush and warm water with a few drops of mild detergent to clean out the fins. This prevents discoloration on the aluminum by keeping the grime from resting there too long.

Don't drench the engine while doing this -- just get the brush wet enough that the detergent can loosen the grime. As long as you stay on the sides of the engine, you're safe, but if you have doubts about exactly where you can safely use the brush, check with your motorcycle mechanic for reassurance.

## Final Motorcycle Wipe-Down

Have a couple of clean, soft cloths. Gently wipe everywhere you just brushed, so the cloth can lift off any oily residue or remaining road dirt. Then, step back and give the bike a good once-over, looking closely for any water spots, road dirt, or signs of oiliness you might have missed in the first round of cleaning.