

SA MOTORCYCLES



Is your bike Suspension due for a service?

Suspension is one of the most overlooked components on a motorcycle. What's the point of having 100 + horsepower if your suspension can not handle it or you lose that control entering or exiting a corner on that Sunday ride.

Most people leave fork oil changes until the seals have let go and are starting to leak oil, in most cases this is too late. The most critical part of your suspension maintenance is the oil. When it's fresh the damping works at it's optimum, it lubricates the suspension internals and will maintain it's intended damping characteristics as things heat up or cool down.

The thing that "wears oil out" from a damping point of view is heat. Heat causes the long molecules of an oil to break into small molecules. Oxygen will react with oil to create heavier particles which become sludge that clogs narrow channels. The oil's job is to convert energy from bumps etc. into heat to control the springs action, therefore it has a limited life. Moisture will find its way in, no matter what you do to try to stop it, this contaminates the oil. and lastly, the action of the suspension, one part sliding on the other will produce wear particles this also contaminates oil and reduces its effectiveness and will wear the moving parts until the oil is replaced.

Any parts that are excessively worn will cause a lack of precision and control from any suspension system. Worn fork bushes mean you will not have precise steering may experience a shudder under brakes, and will prematurely wear the front tyre and steering head bearings. Worn linkages mean free play at the wheel that is uncontrolled suspension action and this can cause loss of traction. Metal parts move against each other creating friction and wear. The higher the [oil viscosity](#), the more it will protect moving parts. Suspension damping, because of the hydraulic nature of its design, requires oils of low viscosity and, together with the additional demands made on it, should be changed more regularly than other oils to protect parts from wear.

So As a guide for a road bike you should change your fork oil every 12 months or 15-20,000k's. Dirt bikes are a little harder to work out maintenance times but as a guide 40 to 60 hours depending on the type of riding you are doing.

A rear shock is a different matter, if you pay attention to how your shock works and how quickly it starts to fade when riding then you will definitely know when to service your shock.

Diminishing suspension performance is subtle and deterioration occurs gradually so most riders don't notice it happening. Untouched suspension at 40 to 60,000k – would have putrid oil that will smell like distilled cat's pee. Generally the suspension internals are then so bad that other parts need to be replaced as a result.

Don't neglect one of the most important parts on your bike call our service department to book in your pride and joy and have that new bike feeling back ready for Spring, also enquire about the supply and fitment of the correct fork and shock springs to suit your weight.

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