

How to Wash a Motorcycle

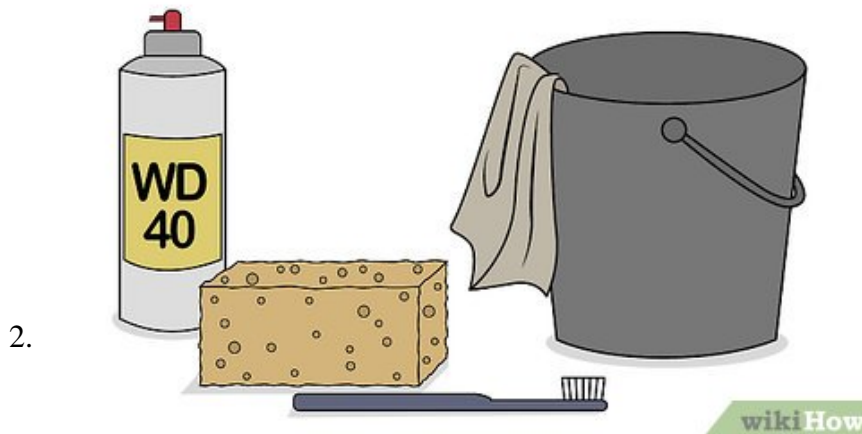
Washing your motorcycle isn't just about keeping your sweet ride looking great. If you don't wash your bike regularly and correctly, you'll risk damaging its looks and its parts. Giving your dirty motorcycle a bath, however, doesn't...

Part 1 of 3:

Pre-Cleaning Your Motorcycle



Let your bike cool down. Spraying water all over a hot engine is a recipe for disaster: the sudden change in temperature can crack the engine block. Even if you've just gone down a wet country road and your motorcycle's caked in mud, let it cool down before you begin.^[1]



Get your cleaning gear together. While you're waiting for your motorcycle to cool down, why not grab the supplies you'll need to clean it? All of the supplies you'll need can be found at your local auto or motorcycle shop. Make sure to gather:^[2]

1. A bucket
2. A clean sponge or two
3. Several clean, dry cloths (chamois or microfiber)
4. Degreaser and/or WD-40
5. An old toothbrush (to help clean tight places)
6. Auto/motorcycle wax (optional)
7. Bug and tar remover (if needed)
8. Chrome cleaner (if needed)

3.

Picture 3 of How to Wash a Motorcycle

Start by cleaning the chain. If your motorcycle has a chain, getting the dirt and grease off of it first is a smart move. This keeps the grime from splashing all over the rest of your bike while you're trying to clean it. Use an approved chain degreaser if you can find one at your local shop. Spray it on the chain to loosen debris, then wipe it away with a clean cloth.^[3]

1. WD-40 will also work as a solvent to loosen grease and dirt.
2. Make sure to apply lubricant to your chain again once you are done cleaning your motorcycle.

4.

Picture 4 of How to Wash a Motorcycle

Clean the non-chrome engine parts with water and solvent. Before starting on the body, take care of any other nooks and crannies around the engine area that need special attention. Dip an old toothbrush in clean, cool water and gently scrub dirt and debris away. Spray WD-40 on the gunk if you need extra help removing it.^[4]

1. Generally, however, keep away from the brake lines and bearings. Getting water into these areas can cause corrosion and other problems.

Part 2 of 3:

Washing the Body

1.

Picture 5 of How to Wash a Motorcycle

Rinse the bike with cool water. This will help loosen any dirt and rinse as much of it away as possible, making the cleaning process easier. Just make sure to use a gentle stream of water from a hose. High-pressure sprays can damage the finish, paint or other materials, and should be avoided.^[5]

2.

Picture 6 of How to Wash a Motorcycle

Rub the whole body with a soft sponge or cloth. A little elbow grease at this point will help remove additional grime. Dip a sponge or soft cloth in a bucket of cool water, and wipe it all over the body of your motorcycle.^[6]

1. If you are cleaning your bike to remove salt from it (such as after riding on a winter road), just use water in this way, then skip to waxing it. Using detergents or other cleaners might make the salt problem worse.

3.

Picture 7 of How to Wash a Motorcycle

Clean plastic parts with slightly soapy water. If your motorcycle has plastic parts on the body, it's just fine to use an approved auto detergent. Add some to a bucket of cool water, and wipe the parts with a sponge dipped in the suds.^[7]

4.

Picture 8 of How to Wash a Motorcycle

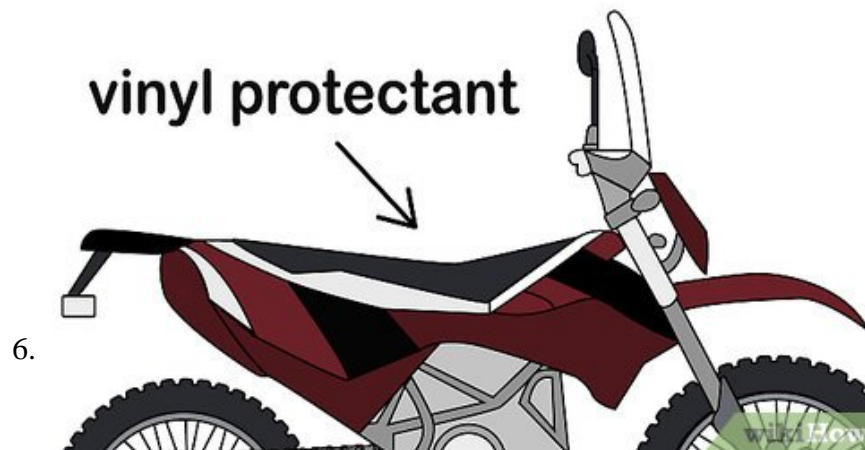
Rinse the entire motorcycle again. After you've cleared off all the muck and grime from your bike, grab your hose again. Use a gentle spray to wash away the last of the dirt and any traces of suds. If there's not much to clear off, you can also dip a clean sponge into clear, cool water, and use this to rinse the bike.^[8]

5.

Picture 9 of How to Wash a Motorcycle

Wipe off excess water and let your bike dry. Take a dry chamois or microfiber cloth and gently rub down your motorcycle. This will wick away the water left on it, so that there won't be any water spots left as your bike air-dries.^[9]

1. Don't let your motorcycle dry in direct sunlight, since this can also cause water spots.

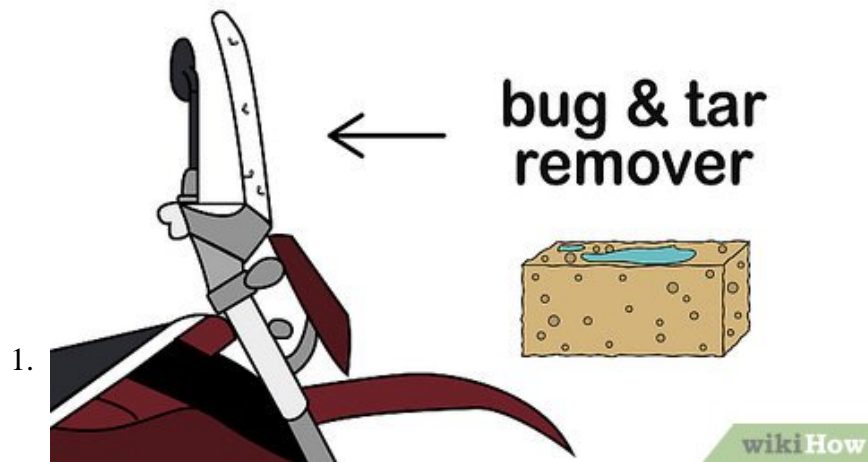


Buff your seat with an approved protectant. Motorcycle seats can be made from a variety of materials. Vinyl and leather are the most common. Vinyl seats are quite tough, but can fade and crack over time. Use an approved vinyl protectant to halt these problems. Leather seats are more delicate, but using a leather care cream will protect yours.^[10]

1. Protectants for vinyl and leather can be found at any auto or motorcycle supply store.
2. Do not use detergents on leather.

Part 3 of 3:

Detailing Your Ride



Remove stubborn bug grime. Any biker knows that a nice ride can leave your motorcycle looking you waged war against a swarm of flies. If your motorcycle is caked in bug goo, soak it liberally with bug and tar remover. After the grime is loosened, use a soft sponge or cloth to wipe it away, and another damp one to remove any leftover residue.^[11]



Clean aluminium wheels with soapy water. Many modern bikes have lightweight aluminum wheels. If you want to clean yours, use only soapy water and a soft cloth. Rinse with water and wipe with a dry cloth.^[12]

1. Abrasive cleaners or tools can damage the finish or paint on wheels, so avoid these.
2. If you have traditional chrome wheels, use chrome cleaner instead.



Use car or motorcycle wax for added protection. A quality wax can protect the finish of your bike and keep dirt and grime away. Apply this after the rest of your bike is thoroughly cleaned. Follow the directions on your commercial wax spray or rub. Each product will have slightly different instructions.^[13]

4.

Picture 14 of How to Wash a Motorcycle

Spray protectant on your bearings. The bearings are one of the most important but delicate parts of a motorcycle. A dedicated protective spray will help coat the bearings and keep moisture and dirt at bay. See your chosen product's package for the exact application instructions.^[14]

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