

ABCD Quick Check

A is for Air & Adjustments

- First step, do you have air in your tires? Awesome! Next, how much do you need? More air means an easier ride but it is going to be bumpier. Less means a smoother ride but you need to work harder to go just as fast.
- It is important to ensure that the bike fits you properly. Setting your seat too high will cause you to over extend your leg and cause knee pain and eventually injury. Setting your seat too low will stop you from getting a full stroke out of every pedal -- causing you to work much harder. Have a friend steady your bike while you get on and backpedal. Your knee should still be slightly bent when the pedal is at its lowest point.
- Check that your handle bars are at an appropriate height and distance for you. Once again over extension and under extension will cause problems. Find what's right for you.

B is for Brakes, Brackets

- Most important, brakes. No point going anywhere if you can't stop. Engage your front brake and try to push your bike forward. If your wheel moves, tighten your brakes. Repeat with your back wheel.
- Ensure your brakes do not rub on your rims while not engaged.
- Make sure when you squeeze your brake levers that they do not meet your handle bars.
- Check to make sure that the brackets on your pannier racks are securely fastened to your bike. Also make sure your panniers fit without getting in the way of anything.

C is for Chain, Controls & Condition

- Chains should be well greased and clear of dirt to avoid damage.
- Ensure that your shifters are calibrated to your derailleurs (i.e. you don't want to shift down a gear and have your derailleurs jump down two).
- Make sure that both tires are in working condition. If the tread is worn down to the tire, you are risking a flat. Check old slicks for cracks. Make sure the valve stem is at a 90 degree angle to the rim.
- Both sets of brake pads should be in good condition. New brake pads have grooves. Over-used pads will be worn down past the grooves.
- Shifter and brake cables should have caps at the end. If missing, at least ensure they are not frayed.

D is for Drop Test

- Simply enough, load up your bike with all your gear and drop. Now before you climb the roof all you need to do is pick it up a foot off the ground and drop it on its wheels. Nothing should fall off. If anything loosens or is wobbling around give it a quick tighten and try again.

Quick is for Quick Release

- To adjust your quick releases to the proper tension attempt to take it off your front fork. If it didn't take a little tug to get off then your quick release is too loose. Adjust the lever so that it points up and to the back of the bike (towards 2 o'clock). It should be tight enough to leave a bit of a white pressure mark on your palm when you lock it.