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The information on this page is intended as a guide only, please consult your owners manual, or battery manufacturer for individual instructions concerning your products.

Motorcycle Batteries

When you start up your bike, the electric starter draws a current from the battery. When you are riding, the alternator will then re-charge what you have 'used'. In normal circumstances the alternator will then provide all the current required by the bike whilst riding. However at times when you are in slow traffic or doing short runs, the alternator will not provide enough current and will start to drain on your battery. Persistent short and slow runs will deteriorate your battery as the alternator will not have the 'time' to recharge what you have used by starting the bike, and what you are pulling from the battery during the short runs. It will take about 10-15 minutes riding at 50-60mph to recharge what you've used starting the bike up.

Motorcycle Storage

Motorbikes will place a drain on the battery even if it is not in use. If you are storing your motorcycle over winter or for any length of time exceeding 6 weeks, you would do some good to remove the battery from your bike.
Fully charge your battery before storing it in a safe dry place, as storing a semi-charged battery can cause deterioration.
Ensure the battery is not placed anywhere near any electrics or fires and neither in some place where it may freeze.
You should clean the battery case and terminals with a damp cloth using a little baking soda and water.

Checking your battery

If any of your battery cells are lower than the recommended level, you should add distilled water to the cells which have a low level and THEN charge the battery. Do not attempt to charge the battery before as it will be a slightly pointless exercise ;)

You should keep an eye on the battery when in use every fortnight, and when not in use every 2 months and put on charge if necessary. Don't automatically presume your battery was charged when you left it and that it will be ok four months later.

Charging your battery

Red is positive and Black is negative. Connect the red clip to the + and connect the black clip to the -. Charge the battery away from naked flames and sparks. The gases given off by a battery can be explosive.

You should use a charger suitable for your type of battery. The charger should give a greater output than the battery voltage. However, if it is too high the battery acid will start the wonderful process of electrolysis, which creates gas bubbles.

A regular battery charger will not regulate the charging voltage and you will need to disconnect the battery charger from the battery at the end of it's charge. An optimiser can be left on the battery as it effectively 'switches off' when the battery is charged and 'tops up' when it checks itself.

Reviving a dead motorcycle battery

If your battery is flat you should place it on charge with a suitable motorcycle charger or Optimiser.

A battery which is fully discharged and left will sulphate and will not be able to retain or sustain a full charge for any length of time, even if you have been able to fully charge it.

If you are persistently suffering from a dead battery, you should check to see if your alternator (rectifier) is working correctly.

If your battery has bitten the dust, you shouldn't waste too much time in buying a replacement, As your old battery will be unlikely to hold a good charge for any length of time.

Charging a new motorcycle battery

The first charge of a new battery is the most important charge of the batteries life span. Most are dry charged which means they will perform for a short while. If your battery is not fully charged when you first put it on your bike then it starts at a disadvantage.

If you have a dry battery, fill the cells slowly and leave the battery for around half an hour, to allow them to settle and then top up if required. Do not overfill the cells!

The minimum charge should be for at least 8 hours, If the battery during this time gets warm, turn off the charger and wait until it cools down.

Battery Maintenance

It is advisable to put your battery on charge every two weeks using a suitable battery charger. Optimisers are ideal as they will not overheat or over charge your battery.

Make sure the connections are clean and the electrolyte is at the upper level. Don't fill the cells up to the very top of the battery. If your battery has an upper and lower level, ensure that all the cells are on the upper level, not over and definitely not under the lower level ! One weak cell can contaminate the others. Use only distilled water for topping off the low cells.

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