

# SWINGARM MAINTENANCE

Swingarm bushings. If you were to mention the subject to the majority of the local dirt riders and racers, they would come back at you with remarks like, "Huh?", "What?", and, "Oh yeah, my bike has a set of those, doesn't it?" We know of one expert racer who competes on a regular basis with the same bike, and when asked what he does to maintain his swingarm bushings, he remarked, "Oh, I didn't know you had to fool with those things!" There's just gobs and gobs of you out there that have probably never even thought about your swingarm bushings, and what an important role they play in the proper operation of your rear suspension system.

That's what this article is all about. The basic care of swingarm bushings, how to keep 'em maintained, and what will happen if you let this article go as, "Just another tech article."

Now that we've completely destroyed your faith and confidence in the rear end of your motorcycle, we're gonna throw some fancy facts about bushings to you to restore some of that confidence.

First, go out to that poor old neglected scoot of yours, grab the rear tire and try to move it from side to side. Notice any side slop? If you do, your bushings are probably way overdue for replacement. Read on and find out what's the best way to go as far as replacement and keeping them maintained.

We talked to many local shop mechanics to see what they had to say about what's good to replace, how much it will cost if you let it go too far before taking it to them, and their own personal ideas for maintenance, how often, and why. Naturally, opinions varied with the different brands of bikes discussed.

## NEW AND OLD STYLE MAICOS

New style Maicos require constant service, due to the needle bearing arrangement, so great attention must be given to these workings. Some of the Maico mechanics have found that STP oil treatment works well for lubing the assembly. It is also recommended that you lube after every ride if you're in the habit of spray washing your machine. What will happen if you let the assembly go?

The bearings will waste themselves away, resulting in a sloppy swingarm.



Nine times out of ten, the chain will loop off the sprocket, which will almost always break the ignition cover. Plus the swingarm will have to be repaired. The total cost could run you close to fifty dollars. It would definitely be worth your while to watch after these bearings. As far as old style Maicos go, they are equipped with rubber bushings and need no maintenance until they're worn.

## CZ

You CZ owners should have no problem keeping your swingarm set up in fine working order. Just pull off the side nut, lay the bike on its side, and fill up the cavity with oil. CZ's can go through about three months of steady racing without bushing replacement. What happens if you let it go? The whole unit will eventually seize up, and your chances of getting it apart are pretty slim. The whole unit would have to be torched out, which would ruin the rear motor mounts, not to mention the shaft and bushings. The cost of replacing? About thirty dollars. About the best way to go for a replacement swingarm would be the Pro-Fab unit, which is very light and strong. The cost is about ninety-nine dollars.

## OSSA

There is also very little maintenance involved in keeping the Ossa swingarm going strong. Mid-Valley CZ and Ossa suggests you install a grease fitting and grease after every ride. If you decide not to, the cost of repair is about thirty dollars for bushing and labor. Stock swingarm is fine as is, and no replacement swingarm is really necessary.

## KTM

It's advisable that you lube after every ride. Swingarm runs on needle bearings, and like the Maico, needs constant care to avoid running the whole unit. The cost of repair could run you about fifty dollars for parts and labor, so keep after those little devils.

As far as replacement, KTM sells a kit of all new bearings for about twelve dollars a side.

## SUZUKI

Suzuki advises that you check out the units after every ride. Mechanics were unable to give too many hints, but suggested you check your service manual for maintenance procedure. They did mention that if you do fail to check them out regularly, it could run you about forty dollars for shop repair. Good replacement swingarms available for the RMs are the DG and THOR units.

## HONDA ELSINORE

Honda has been making their swingarm bushings out of a compressed fiber that is low in the durability department. Honda mechanics recommend that you replace them first thing, after you buy a new Elsinore. Bronze bushings seem to be the best way to go as far as replacement, but you are warned to keep them constantly lubed, as they can seize up quite easily without the proper care. One of the big problems with the new Elsinores seems to be the strength of the swingarm. New Hondas are showing up right and left with hairline cracks around the axle, so it's really would be an investment to look into a replacement arm.

## YAMAHA

The new Yamahas come stock with a grease fitting under the swingarm, so the major chore would be just to keep the thing lubed after every ride. The Yamaha also carries a needle bearing arrangement, so maintenance is very important. Cost of fixing in the shop could run you up to fifty dollars.

## HUSQVARNA

The Husky runs on rubber bushings and requires little maintenance, but if you let it go too long, you're really asking for trouble. One of the most important things to keep checked on the Husky is the swingarm nut. It's critical that you keep the thing torqued to fifty-foot lbs., or the whole system could go out. Alignment is also very important when tightening the nut. What happens if you let it go? The engine plates will wear the wrong way, the shaft will ruin, and the labor involved is quite a bit. The cost? About ninety dollars. Watch that set-up!! ●