

Cleaner Filter = Cleaner Air

Clear The Air

CLEANER FILTER = CLEANER AIR



Air filter cleaners and oils are available from filter manufacturers, as well as the aftermarket.

BY STEVE LITA

OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND — THAT'S usually the case with air filters. But, eventually, your dirty habits will catch up with you. If you don't periodically clean the air filter on your bike, you'll likely end up with power loss, reduced fuel mileage, and a rich-running engine.

Most modern bikes come with a paper filter element, which usually gets tossed to make room for a reusable aftermarket one. If you've upgraded to a high-performance filter, this article is for you. If you're still running the old paper one, why haven't you upgraded yet?

Reusable elements are coated with a special oil that retains dirt particles to keep them from entering and damaging your engine. The filter is usually made of foam or gauze, held in shape by a wire cage. With proper maintenance, these aftermarket elements will last a long time, perhaps even for the life of the bike. All that's involved is occasionally washing, drying, and re-oiling the filter. So here are some tips for getting the job done right.

The first step is to carefully remove the filter from your bike's airbox (see your owner's manual for instructions). But before ripping it out, remember to work cleanly. You don't want dirt or dust to sprinkle into the airbox or down the intake ports while you're removing the filter, so first use compressed air and a blow gun to get dirt away from the airbox lid. After you've removed the filter element, wipe the inside of the airbox and cover the opening or intake ports with a clean rag.

Give the filter a shake over a trash can to loosen large debris. Then spray a solvent on the filter and let it soak for a bit (no need to brush or scrape, which might damage the element). Different filter manufacturers suggest different soaking times — anywhere from 3 to 10 minutes — so check the instructions for the cleaner you're using. In a pinch, you can often use household dishwashing soap or liquid cleaners, as long as they cut grease.

Next, hold the filter under tap water at normal pressure, clean side up, to flush away the



Apply the cleaning agent to the dirty filter, let it soak, and then rinse from the inside out using gentle tap water pressure.

dirty soup. Make sure you get all the solvent out. When you're done, shake off the excess water and let the filter air-dry. Don't try to rush it by using compressed air or a hair dryer, as you'll damage the element. Once it's completely dry, re-oil the filter. There are many quality aftermarket filter oils available; just be sure to use air filter oil specifically, since other petroleum oils may damage the filter and end seals. Coat the filter evenly and gently shake off any excess.

Finally, reinstall the filter (don't forget to remove any rags or towels you've placed in the airbox). Now your engine is ready for many miles of easy breathing. Just keep in mind that you may need to clean the filter several times a year if you live in a dusty climate. **RB**

SOURCES

K&N ENGINEERING
PO Box 1329
1455 Citrus St., Dept. RB
Riverside, CA 92502
800/858-3333
www.knfilters.com

UNI FILTER
1468 S. Manhattan Ave.
Dept. RB
Fullerton, CA 92831
714/535-6933
www.unifilter.com