

Chain

INSTALLING RK'S NEW
GXW-SERIES DRIVE CHAIN

Reaction

By Steve Lita

CHAINS ARE PROBABLY ONE OF THE LEAST thought about, but most important, components of your bike's drivetrain. No chain, no go. And since it's exposed to the elements constantly, your chain needs periodic inspection and care to ensure a long service life. How long a chain lasts depends on your bike's engine output, the kinds of environments you ride in, and how well you maintain it.

So, when my bike's odometer turned 26k, I started planning for a chain replacement. I'm a bit of a chain maintenance fanatic; maybe that's why my original one made it to 26,000 miles.

A good choice for a replacement came by way of RK's GXW line. The "XW" stands for the type of O-ring used in the links. The XW ring has three lubrication pools to hold the lube better and longer, resulting in a longer-lasting chain. In fact, this chain's service life can be up to 50 percent

longer than stock. (The company even offers a 20,000-mile warranty — how's that for confidence in its product?) The chain also comes with a rivet-type master connecting link, so there's no C-clip loss to worry about here.

Swapping a chain is generally a straightforward process. But this chain's rivet-type master link requires special tools to do the job right. And while the average shade tree mechanic may not own a comprehensive collection of chain tools, the job can't really be done properly without them. Rent, borrow, or buy them before you get started.

By the way, it's a good idea to replace the gears along with the chain. I'd replaced the front sprocket on this bike not long ago as part of a gear ratio change, so it was still fresh. For this install, I replaced the rear gear with an OEM unit.

Here's how to do the work.



1 To check for excessive chain wear, pull the chain away from the rear gear. If you can move it half the distance of the gear tooth, it means your old chain is shot.



2 Find the original equipment (OE) master link; this is where the chain will separate.



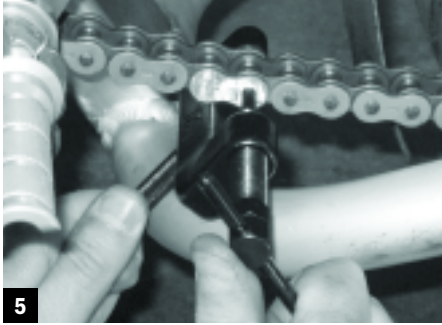
3 The tools you'll need for the job: a die grinder, safety glasses, a torque wrench with socket, a chain rivet press, and new replacement parts. A caliper will help you measure the chain during assembly.



4 Grind the original rivet heads flush (and don't forget your safety glasses!). This will make it easier for the chain press pin to drive the old master link out.

SOURCES

GB525GXW Chain
from \$89.95
RK RACING CHAIN
1960 Peacock Blvd.
Dept. RB
Oceanside, CA 92056
760/732-3161
www.ftmbiz.com



5 Using a proper chain tool, drive the original pin out. This will take some muscle.



9 Tighten the nuts to the proper torque, according to your shop manual.



11 Lace the new chain onto the gears. If your front gear isn't exposed, try zip-tying the new chain to the old one and pulling it through. Then install



6 Remove the rear wheel for gear replacement. Make a note of any markings or offset on the OE sprocket.



10 Here's my new chain, ready for fitment on the reinstalled wheel. RK ships its chains pre-lubed.



12 Use care when you're pressing the outer plate onto the chain. Press too far, and you could cause it to bind. I did this procedure in several steps, checking periodically as I went.



7 Install the new sprocket, making sure the orientation is correct.



8 It's not a bad idea to use some liquid thread lock on the nuts. (This bike had red Loctite from the factory.)

Tool Tip

Chain Breaker And Riveting Tool By Steve Lita

Most high-quality replacement chains include master links with press-fit side plates, and also contain rivets that need to be peened over. A vise grip will just not do the job correctly.

You need the right tool, like this kit from Motion Pro. It includes everything required to properly remove old chain rivets, press the master link side plate on, and peen over the new rivets. The kit contains different sized bits to cover everything from cam chains all the way up to drive chains, sizes 428 to 530. All the bits are organized in a molded plastic case.

If you're an average weekend wrench-turner, you may find the kit a bit pricey, but you should think of it as an investment. It will pay for itself by providing the peace of mind that you did the job right. And, besides, all your riding buddies will thank you when they find out you have one. ■



SOURCES

Part #08-0058
\$101.10
MOTION PRO
867 American St.
Dept. RB
San Carlos, CA 94070
650/594-9600
www.motionpro.com



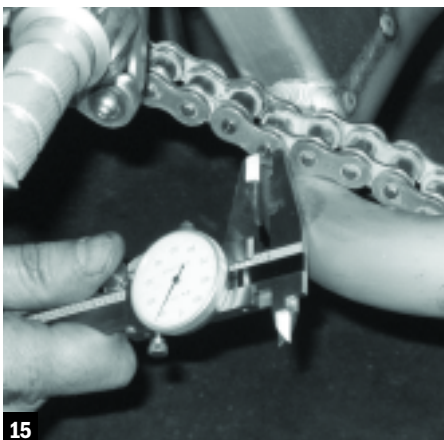
13

You may want to use a caliper to help you line up the plate. Measure several other links to get an average depth.



14

Peen the end of the rivet with the appropriate attachment, again being careful not to press too far and bind the chain.



15

Use the caliper again to check the diameter of the peened rivet head. It should match the others on the chain.



16

Finally, adjust the rear wheel for proper chain slack and wheel alignment. You're almost done — just don't forget to send in the 20,000-mile warranty card. **RB**

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