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GreaseSpot #15 – Checking Brake Pads

The purpose of the 'GreaseSpot' is to share ideas and tips on 'two wheel vehicle' maintenance (Bicycle and Motorcycle). Questions, ideas and tips come from our fellow riders, and they can be on most any topic of maintenance. GreaseSpot #14 focused on 'Cold Weather Engine Starting'; if you would like us to resend this GreaseSpot just let us know (info@greaseninja.com).

FIRST SOME NEWS TO SHARE: After 4.5 years, the first (and most important) United States Patent was granted last month. We proudly display the "United States Patent 9,079,720 B1" on our Products, Literature and Website. We, of course, were jumping up and down and had a brief celebration.

Checking Disc Brake Pads…

As important as braking is on a motorcycle (or any vehicle for that matter), you would think that checking the 'brake pad wellness' would be as easy as checking the tread life on the tires. After a summer of riding, we at GreaseNinja all had blank stares when a question came in about disc pad life on our motorcycles. All of us knew whether or not we should be thinking about getting new tires, either at the end of the season or sometime next year. But being honest with ourselves, we did not really have a 'solid feeling' on the condition of our brake pads…other than the pads were not squealing when braking.

We know about the tire tread life because the depth of tread is easily seen and the meaning easily understood. Well, checking the disc brake pad condition is easy too, if you are aware of a couple of easy tips.

You should check your Owner's Manual for the brake pad specs, or call your local Dealer to understand when brake pads should be changed; this is typically somewhere between 1-3 mm of brake pad thickness. We know it is hard to relate to 1 - 3 mm when on your knees with a flashlight and squinting.

But here some things we can relate to:

Nickel Thickness: 1.95 mm

Dime Thickness: 1.35 mm

Quarter Thickness: 1.75 mm

We used the 'nickel' to be conservative. We took a 'paint stirrer' stick and sanded two inches (50 mm) of the end down to the thickness of a nickel – a little more that half the thickness of the stirrer…easy to do. If our 'nickel stick' does not fit between the disc pad plate and the disc, then we know the pad is less than 1.95 mm and it is time to have a professional mechanic inspect / replace the pads. In the future, we will convert our wooden 'nickel stick' to a slick plastic stick.

Chain Cleaners…

We have been asked several times if the GreaseNinja can be used to apply aerosol chain cleaners. The answer is **YES.** There is not a grease cutting solvent that we know of that will harm the GreaseNinja. By the way, we continue to investigate spray bottles that will handle kerosene, however, the spray head manufacturers we have spoken with have said, 'there are components in the spray head that are not compatible with kerosene'. We are still working on this one.