## Tires Put On Backwards

I have a 1998 Honda CB750 Nighthawk and about three months and 5000 miles ago, I had a set of Metzeler MEZ4 tires put on my bike. The other night, while doing a routine inspection, I made the discovery that my rear tire was put on backwards, against the rotation of the arrow stamped on the tire. I haven't noticed any handling or braking problems, however, and I have not experienced any real truly wet conditions on this set of tires, either. Is it safe to remount the tire in its correct orientation or would you recommend replacing it entirely? Have I put myself in any imminent danger by running the tire backwards thus far? The bike comes stock with bias-ply, would this have anything to do with it? Could I leave the tire as-is until it's time for a new set?

On another note, I am the original owner of the motorcycle and it's nearing the 60,000 mile mark and if any of the other readers out there have experience with this bike, I'd appreciate any advice on what I should be looking to replace as preventative maintenance before any major breakdowns occur. The owners manual only advises routine maintenance and I've done so. So far, I have replaced my clutch, clutch cable and battery once, and speedo cable and cylinder head cover gasket twice.

Martin Lucas
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*Yes, absolutely turn it around **right now**, after you carefully inspect it to ensure that critical damage has not already occurred by having the tire rotate in the wrong direction. This is not just a tread pattern issue, the construction of the tire internally is designed to have the loading applied in one direction only, and counter-rotation can lead to tread separation from the carcass among other, very bad things.*

## Shadow Tappet Cover Gaskets

I ride a '95 Honda Shadow 1100C with 24,000 miles on it. Last July, I had the tappet cover gasket on the forward cylinder replaced. Last week, I discovered that the replaced gasket was leaking. The shop indicated that I will also have to replace the head gasket. Honda has built its reputation on reliability. Why is the new tappet gasket leaking? Could the head be warped? Early last riding season, I mistakenly let the bike idle for about 10 minutes with the choke on. Would that have damaged the head?

Steve Sprowles
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*No, 10 minutes of idling with the choke on will not warp the heads. And the only way to tell if a warped head is the reason for the leak is to measure it against a flat machined surface using feeler gauges.*

*Because of modern manufacturing methods, it is very unusual to have a gasket fail, and we often find that when a gasket leaks after replacement and the head is not warped, the reason is either improper torque on reassembly, or a gouge in the mating surfaces.*

## Mysterious Crosswind Problem

I have a 1991 ZX-11 that has a frustrating problem. The bike is stock except for a four-into-one pipe and a Factory jet kit. It starts and runs in most cases superbly, but when I get into a heavy crosswind, it loses power and shuts down. This happened about 600 miles ago on a trip to Eastern Washington from Seattle.

The bike handled the mountain passes just fine and there was plenty of acceleration going up, but when I got about 200 miles into the trip, the bike started sputtering like it was running out of fuel and then shut off. There was no problem in immediately starting it up and gaining speed, but then farther down the road, it would start coughing.

It often caught itself after a twist on the throttle and would sometimes accelerate from having the throttle turned up. When I returned to Seattle, I took it in to the shop, and they replaced the air filter, some seals around the ram air ducts, cleaned the carbs, replaced the carb manifolds and put in a new fuel filter. All went well until another trip across state.

When reaching the open wheat fields with a severe crosswind, it started acting up again. I got it into Spokane and it ran fine after getting into town and sheltered areas. Two days later I headed south. Determined to avoid any problems, I kept a steady 75 mph, and it ran fine until about 120 miles out, until I hit the winds coming from the Columbia River.

Again, it started shutting down. I got through the Pasco traffic with no problems and headed south across the wheat fields. Again, somewhere over 50 mph, it started shutting down again. If I stopped, there was no problem in starting the bike and getting back to speed. However, as soon as I got to speed, it would start again. I finally turned the bike around and headed the opposite direction back to town and, surprisingly, the bike ran fine. Buoyed by this experience, I turned around again. It started shutting down again. I turned around again and it ran fine. I repeated the experiment with the same result—south bad, north okay. I headed for home and had no problem in running down the Columbia to Seattle on I-5. I haven't been able to replicate the problem on this side of the mountains and the shop can't either. None of the mechanics I have talked to have an answer. I plan to replace the fuel pump as a possibility, but that's only speculation. I can ride the bike in the mountains here, but I sure would like to get to Arizona, but the bike doesn't seem to want to.

What is it trying to tell me?

Stan Wagner
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*We've experienced this problem ourselves on some ram-air equipped machines. Side winds seem to prevent correct air intake and can cause momentary hesitation, or in your case, perhaps even worse. This obviously depends on the angle of the wind direction, as you've noted.*

*As a possible cure, we suspect that it may have something to do with the way that your carburetor atmospheric vent hoses are routed. We would carefully check the position and length of the tubing.*

## Troublesome Periodic Maintenance

Last year I asked you if it was really necessary to grease the driveshaft splines on my Vulcan 750 because the disassembly required to get to them seemed like a lot of work. Your answer spurred me to tear it down and do the job. Lately I've read about a couple of driveshaft failures, no doubt due to lack of this maintenance. I owe you a big thanks!

Now I'm wondering about bearings—specifically the steering stem and swingarm bearings. Again, Kawasaki says they should be greased. I really hate to tear down the steering stem when everything's working fine. I'm thinking about replacing these with sealed bearings from All-Balls, and removing them from the list of "periodic maintenance" items. Is this a good idea, or am I just being too lazy?

Ken Johnson
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*Yes, by all means, the swingarm and steering head bearings should be inspected and lubricated at the specified times in your manual. During the disassembly and inspection process, do not forget to inspect the bearing braces for galling, indentations or out-of-round conditions. The proper handling of your motorcycle is at stake here. We do not recommend substitution of these bearings with the sealed type because the inspection part of the service is indeed vital, and it is easy to let it slide if you do not have to disassemble for lubrication purposes. It is also very, very important that when reassembling these components, proper bearing preload torque is maintained for both handling and safety reasons.*

## Bad Brake

I own an '86 Kawasaki Ninja 1000R with just over 21,000 miles on it. The bike has been drag raced in a stock street class for about two-thirds of its life. Thus, the front brake rotors have had a hard time. I am getting some surging and rubbing sounds when I ride the bike without depressing the brakes. And I feel these problems increase dramatically when I use the front brakes. I went to my local Kawasaki dealer to see what new rotors were going to cost me, and much to my surprise the dealer almost had to call 911 for my near heart attack; try $800 + tax for the pair! The bike runs excellent and looks good, but it is maybe worth just $2000.

So here is my question: Can bike rotors be resurfaced? There are no deep grooves or pits in the rotors and they don't appear to have any "visible" hot spots. However, there are small fork seal leaks above the brake calipers on both sides of the bike that could cause a minimal amount of oil to get on the brake pads. (The brake pads are new) The thickness of the rotors is 3/16" on both, all the way around. I haven't noticed any visible warping. Any help or suggestions would be greatly appreciated. Keep up the groovy magazine so my wife and I can fight over who gets it first for another eight years!

Rick Goin
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*To determine if the rotors are really warped, you need to use a rigidly mounted dial gauge with a roller tip against the disc face so that any variation in the lateral runout of the rotor can be read accurately. Pulsing is almost invariably due to such runout. Overheating is the most likely culprit for this warped condition, but aside from heavy use, corroded caliper or master cylinder pistons may be preventing the pads from retracting away from the rotor and that can be causing the rubbing and heat buildup.*

*You should also fix that fork leak. Oil on brake pads is not a good thing. In this case, the oil can create squeaking, and it prevents the bike from stopping properly.*

## Intruder Cylinder Problem

I have a problem with my '03 Suzuki 1400 Intruder. It starts up and idles well and runs for about a mile. Then, when I get up to about 70 mph, it starts losing power and makes popping sounds out of the #1 cylinder. But, the engine doesn't die. Instead, it just slows down.

It stops and idles okay until I put the engine under a load, then the same thing happens again. I checked the fuel line and it has a good flow from the tank. I replaced the ignition coil and the vacuum slide, but I still experience the same problem. I have a CO meter. How can I tell, when I'm looking at the meter, if the problem is a carb problem or an electrical problem? I really need your help on this one.

Lamar Schenk
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*It sounds like the #1 cylinder's carburetor float bowl is not refilling properly at high speed. Check the float valve's needle and seat and also the fuel feedlines for obstructions. This type of situation will allow the bike to run fine at low speeds, but causes it to run out of fuel at high speeds.*

*FYI, CO measures burned fuel, which tells only half the story at best. Ordinarily, both HC (hydrocarbons) and CO (carbon monoxide) readings are used together to identify problems. However, if you know the normal CO reading, you can determine if low CO is caused by ignition or fuel by adding a bit of choke. If CO rises, a lean mixture is causing the misfire, but if CO drops, the ignition is likely to be the cause. Naturally, this needs to be done under load at the rpm where the problem occurs. This is when you'd like to have the use of a dyno.*

## Silent Recall On The V-Strom

Just a note for your downtime files that it seems Suzuki has issued a selective silent recall on failing clutch baskets on the 2002 and 2003 Suzuki DL1000—AKA, the V-Strom.

They are fighting each and every owner whose bike has the 3K-4K rpm chudder (chatter/shudder) or extreme vibration while accelerating in that range. Up to about two months ago, dealers were giving out the company line of "nature of the beast" and "they all do that." But now, the dealer's mechanics can see the problem and if they fight Suzuki USA hard enough, Suzuki will relent and provide a new clutch basket replacement under warranty.

Up to about one month ago, the replacement baskets were the same part number as the original one and at least one owner I know has the same symptoms after a few thousand miles as on his original clutch basket. There is now a new part number and design for recently replaced clutch baskets. (Old number: 21200-06810, New number: 21200-06811)

For those of us out of warranty, this silent, selective recall is futile. Unless you have a good relationship with a dealer who is willing to go to bat for you, you are out of luck. I'm in this boat. Last year I had nary a chudder, but had the precursor problem of the Idle Hammer—a very loud knocking in the clutch area when the engine is hot.

This has quieted down this year (around 8K miles), but now that I'm out of warranty and I've got the 3K-4K chudder.

I maintain an online DL FAQ at http://vstrom.info/, and have recorded the problem and owner replacement experiences. It would be nice if Suzuki just would acknowledge the problem with the clutch and give us all fair treatment and replace the defective clutch basket with a properly designed one.

Dan O'Brien
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Pataskala, OH USA

## New Battery Needed

I have a 1981Kawasaki KZ1100. The batteries are getting hard to find and expensive. The battery is commonly known as YB18LA.

A smaller size battery may fit in the box but will it work? If you can make reference to past issues of MCN on this subject I am all ears. Thanks,

Randy West,
rabbitrandy@yahoo.com
Auburndale Fla.

*As long as the battery is rated at 18 amps or higher, fits in the box, and has terminals, you can connect to the bikes harnesses, it will work. That said, we must caution you that improper fit in the battery box will allow vibration of the battery. This vibration will shorten the life of the battery, and weaken the case. If the case goes, the resulting problems will be more expensive than the original battery.*

**Downtime Files**

**is a joint service of *Motorcycle Consumer News* and the American Motorcycle Institute of Daytona Beach, Florida.**

**Please keep in mind that since the AMI staff has not seen your motorcycle, the answers given are best-guess assumptions based on prior experience and education, and may not necessarily be correct. When in doubt, take your motorcycle to a qualified shop.**

**Send your typewritten questions and photos if possible to:**

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**P.O. Box 6050**
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**Send e-mail questions (with any attached images in jpeg format) to:**

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