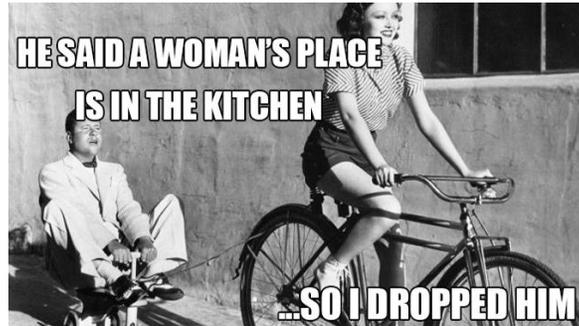


TTIPS VOL. 35/22 – TECHNIQUES INSTALLING AND REMOVING BIKE PEDALS



INTRODUCTION

While I was teaching the most recent KABC Tire Clinic, one of the participants asked me how to remove and install bike pedals. Good question, I thought. Seems like an easy task, right? Yes, it is...but did you know that the pedal spindle (the treaded part of the pedal that screws into the crank arm) on the left side of the bike is “reverse threaded?” Yep, it is. On the left pedal, the old rule of thumb _”Lefty Loosey, Righty Tighty” will not work. On the left pedal, the rule is “Righty Loosey, Lefty Tighty.” Okay, I made that up, but it’s true. The left spindle is made that way so that the rider can’t inadvertently unscrew the threads as he/she are pedaling, because with conventional threading, while the rider pedals, the rider moves the pedal in the same direction that would unscrew the pedal. When that happens things get ugly, quickly. Besides that little fact, sometimes it’s also helpful to have a special pedal wrench.

Don’t let any of this intimidate you or keep you from installing or changing pedals. Read below to see how to do it.

HOW TO INSTALL AND REMOVE BIKE PEDALS

From: The Pro’s Closet (online)

September 21, 2022

New bikes don't come with pedals, so knowing how to install and remove pedals at home is an essential skill. We explain what tools you need, which direction to tighten, and a few other tips and tricks.

Knowing how to install and remove bike pedals is an essential skill for any aspiring home mechanic. It's easy to do — you simply thread the pedals into or out of the crank arms. But there are a few things that are easy to get wrong. Follow these simple tips, and you'll definitely get it right.

Tool for installing and removing bike pedals



You need the correct tool to install or remove your specific pedals. Inspect your pedals to determine which tool you need. It will usually be one of three options:

15mm pedal wrench

8mm hex wrench

6mm hex wrench

Vintage and budget pedals usually require a 15mm pedal wrench that will fit onto the flat sections machined into the pedal spindle. Pedal wrenches are narrow, so they easily fit between the pedal and crank arm. A pedal-specific wrench is ideal, but it isn't always necessary. A 15mm box wrench or small adjustable crescent wrench will do the same job, provided it is narrow enough to fit.

Note: If you use a 15mm cone wrench, be cautious! This tool is extremely thin and could round-out your pedals' wrench flats.

Bike pedal thread direction



Right / drive side pedal: Standard thread — spin clockwise to tighten

Left / non-drive side pedal: Reverse thread — spin counterclockwise to tighten

A lot of people get hung up when installing or removing their pedals because the right pedal uses the standard thread direction (righty-tighty) while the left pedal is reverse threaded (lefty-tighty). The left pedal is reverse threaded to prevent the pedal from loosening itself while pedaling.

Here's an easy way to remember which way to thread your pedals:



To install: Spin the TOP of the pedal spindle toward the FRONT of the bike.

To remove: Spin the TOP of the pedal spindle toward the REAR of the bike.

It's usually obvious which pedal is the right and which is left, but if you're unsure, most pedals will have an "R" and "L" stamped on the pedal spindle. If not, you can identify which side a pedal should be installed on by looking closely at the pedal threads to determine which direction they spin to tighten.

Should you grease bike pedals?

No one likes wrestling with a stuck pedal. Before installing your pedals, you should always grease the threads on the pedal spindle. Grease prevents corrosion, so the pedals will be easier to remove later. If you're installing used pedals, give the threads a quick wipe and clean before greasing. You don't need to use a lot of grease. A small dab spread thinly on the threads is enough.

You don't need to use bike-specific grease, but a small tube is affordable, and it can last for years. If you want to use a non-bike-specific grease, most hardware and auto parts stores will carry waterproof grease or anti-seize.

How tight should you torque bike pedals?

Bike pedals don't need to be torqued down excessively as the spinning motion of the cranks will actually keep the pedals tight as you ride. The typical recommended torque for pedals is about 360 inch-pounds or just over 40.5 Newton meters.

Many mechanics, however, don't tighten pedals this much. The common method is to install the pedals until the spindle contacts the crank arm and then give it a single firm "oomph" with a pedal wrench to tighten it. This will be enough to keep the pedal from loosening, but not so much that the pedal becomes difficult to remove in the future.

Avoid cross-threading bike pedals

Cross-threading happens when the pedal threads do not engage correctly with the threads in the crank arm. If you cross-thread your pedals, it will damage the threads in your crank arm and your pedal can fall out while you're riding.

To avoid cross-threading pedals, make sure you install the pedals into the crank arm as straight as possible. Pedals should always thread in easily, and you shouldn't feel any resistance while tightening. If you do feel resistance, it's best to stop, remove the pedal, and try again. Try cleaning and regreasing the threads on the pedal spindle and in the crank arm.

Well, that's it. I told you it was easy. Now that you know which way the pedal spindle threads are turned, you can check your pedals once-in-awhile to make sure they are tight, and you can also install new pedals if you decide you want to change them.

See you next time, Until then,

Make Every Ride Epic,

Darryl