



PRO ITALIA
MOTORCYCLES

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Storing a Motorcycle for an Extended Period – Pro Italia Motorcycles

For many of us, we're now in cold weather and we've put our bikes away for a time or will do that shortly. We wanted to make sure that we passed on some best practices for storing your bike for an extended period so when warmer weather comes you'll get it on the road without any issues or unnecessary cost.

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Fuel System

If you won't be riding your motorcycle for several weeks (if it's carbureted) or several months (if it's fuel injected), you'll want to make sure your fuel delivery systems are ready for inactivity. Because moisture can accumulate in half-empty tanks, fill up with gas and top it off with a manufacturer-recommended fuel stabilizer (e.g., [Startron](#), or Sta-Bil). With a carbureted engine, you should turn the petcock into the "off" position, loosen the float-bowl drain screw, and catch the fuel in a container. If draining it isn't possible, you can run the engine with the petcock in the "off" position until it dies. For fuel injection run the engine for approximately 10-15 minutes to distribute the stabilizer through the system.

Engine

Performing an oil and [filter](#) change before long term storage will help preserve your engine. Old oil can trap contaminants which damage rubber seals. Always use the proper [wrenches](#) and [tools](#).

Battery

If you will not be using the motorcycle for a few weeks [attach](#) a [battery tender](#) to your battery to keep it charged and ready to go when you're ready to ride again. If you will not be using the motorcycle for a few months the battery should be removed from the motorcycle. This will prevent it from continuing to drain throughout this period without being recharged. Some people will place the battery on a [charger](#) or tender and leave it attached during this time. While others will let it sit and place it on a charger about a month before planning to put it back into the bike.

Fluids

If your brake fluid needs to be changed, do that before long-term storage. Similarly, hydraulic clutch fluid should be changed before you store your bike as both systems may suffer failure if moisture gets in. Also make sure your coolant is fresh, as deposits can form from old fluid. Consult your owners manual or dealer if you are unsure of the service intervals.

Tires

Make sure that the tires are [inflated to the recommended pressure](#). As the weather gets colder and changes, it is important to check the pressure every once in a while to make sure it is still accurate. While checking the tire pressure, move the motorcycle so that the tire is not always sitting on the same spot. If keeping the motorcycle on a cold floor, a good idea is to place a piece of cardboard or wood under the tires to keep the rubber off the cold cement. If your motorcycle has a center stand, use it for long term storage. If you're willing to go the extra mile, so to speak, [use a front and rear stand to lift the tires off the ground](#) (they'll protect your tires and suspension).

Cleaning

Dirt and grime will damage motorcycles, both cosmetically and mechanically, so it is a good idea to thoroughly clean your motorcycle to preserve it during long term storage. Wash your motorcycle before storage and be sure to let your bike completely dry before covering it as trapped condensation can cause rust. Use a degreaser to clean sludge from the outside of the engine. After washing your bike, apply wax to all paint surfaces and chrome polish to chrome; this will keep moisture away (and keep it looking good). Spray some WD40 into the exhaust pipe(s) in order to keep water away; the "WD" stands for water displacement, and keeping moisture out will prevent rust. You can also keep water and critters (we've found some strange passengers in bikes) out by stuffing the intake and exhaust with crumpled plastic bags. In order to ensure that your chain doesn't corrode thoroughly clean and lubricate it.

Cover

If the motorcycle is going to be stored outdoors it's very important to cover it for the storage period with a [proper motorcycle cover](#). Even if you're storing it in the garage, throw a sheet over it or use a [proper cover](#) to keep dust that might be floating around from gathering on it.

What To Do If You're Not Able to Properly Store Your Bike

If it is not possible to properly store a motorcycle, because of the lack of space or a location, it's still important to do a few things throughout the time of inactivity to keep the motorcycle running properly. If you are unable to remove the battery from the motorcycle for the winter, be sure to start it up once or twice a month. When doing so, let the engine run for a while to get it up to operating temperature. Also remember to move the motorcycle at least every month to prevent the tires from sitting in one location and "flattening." If you're storing the motorcycle outdoors, use a [motorcycle cover](#) that is fitted properly to prevent water from collecting on the motorcycle and one with vents to permit moisture to escape.

What To Do Before Your First Ride

If a motorcycle has been properly stored, a rider won't have much to do when taking it out for that first ride. Lube and check the chain, check the (or better yet) change the oil and fluids. Replace the battery (if you've removed it), and do the usual pre-ride checks and the motorcycle should be good-to-go. And . . . take the bags out of the intake and exhaust.

It'll be warm weather soon enough . . . And if you are riding in the cold weather dress properly and be extra careful.