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## HOW-TO

### How to Change Motorcycle Disc Brake Pads

It's easy to change your motorcycle's brake pads, and if you replace them with good fresh ones, you may even get better stopping power in the bargain. *Text & photos by Marc Cook.*

Today's brakes—even the spiffy new radial-mount variety—need little in the way of maintenance save for periodic fluid bleeding and occasional pad inspection and replacement. Changing pads is an easy afternoon job, and if you choose high-spec replacements you'll even get improved performance in the bargain.

Begin by supporting the bike on the centerstand (or your work stand). Leave the fork free to turn because it's advantageous to be able to rotate the front wheel for access. If you're truly anal-retentive, you can devise a way to block the lever to keep bystanders from squeezing the pucks out when you've got the system disassembled. Cut a length of fuel line to fit between the grip and the lever, then pass a long zip-tie around the grip, through the hose and around the lever (1).

Simple pad replacement can be done with the calipers bolted to the fork legs, but it's better to remove them so you can closely inspect the components. Remove the bolts and set them aside. On fixed calipers such as these Brembos, rotate the retaining pins so you can see the loop end of the retaining clips (2). Carefully remove the clips with needle-nose pliers (3). On these Brembos, the retaining pins also keep the dust shield in place, so it will come free when the pins slide out (4). Other fixed calipers may call for removing two small Allen-head screws to liberate the dust shield.

With the pins removed, shake the caliper and the pads will fall out. Check them for cracks, missing pad material and general wear (5). There are telltale lines across the face of the pad; when the pad is worn to the bottom of these grooves, they're done. Before you toss the pads, use some aerosol brake cleaner to remove grime and pad residue from around the caliper pistons (6). Then reinsert the old pads and wedge a chunk of wood (or a large screwdriver) in between them to push the pistons back into their bores (7). As you do this, look at the master-cylinder reservoir to make sure fluid isn't overflowing.



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Prepare the new pads and check the directions to see if you're supposed to reuse the original squeal shims (8). Insert the pads and try to keep your greasy paws off their faces. Reinstall the retaining pins and clips—these may be reused unless damaged. Clean up any remaining goo, and bolt the caliper back to the fork leg. Please use your torque wrench for this operation. Remove the lever block and pump the brakes until firm. Check the master-cylinder fluid level and you're done. Happy squeezing!



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