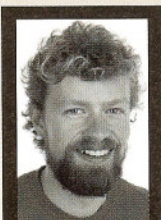


How to... set up your front mech

The **mbr** spannerman shows you how to get the chain running smoothly between your front chainrings

Following on from the March workshop where we looked at the rear mech, this issue focuses on the Achilles heel of many a home mechanic — the front mech. Just like the rear mech, set-up is much easier when you understand exactly what the adjustments do, rather than tinkering blindly.

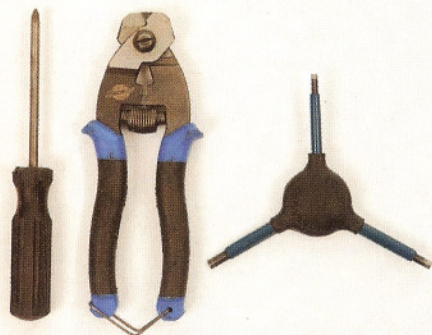
The main problem people have with setting up front mechs is the positioning of the clamp on the frame — get this wrong and you've got no chance. If your bike comes with an e-type or direct mount front mech you won't need to worry about this as long as it was installed properly in the first place. As with a rear mech, there are two main adjustments to be made: the limit screws and cable tension. The limit screws control the range of movement across the chainrings. The L (low) screw deals with the position of the mech in the smallest chainring. The H (high) screw does the same for the largest chainring. Cable tension is set at the clamp on the mech and fine-tuned by the barrel adjuster at the shifter. Correct cable tension allows all three rings to be accessed and fine-tunes the position of the mech in the middle ring position, which is not affected by either limit adjustment. Remember, it will often be impossible to eliminate rubbing altogether.



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TOOLS FOR THE JOB

No2 Phillips screwdriver, cable cutters, Allen keys



1 Give the drivetrain a clean and make sure it's not worn out or damaged.

TOP TIP

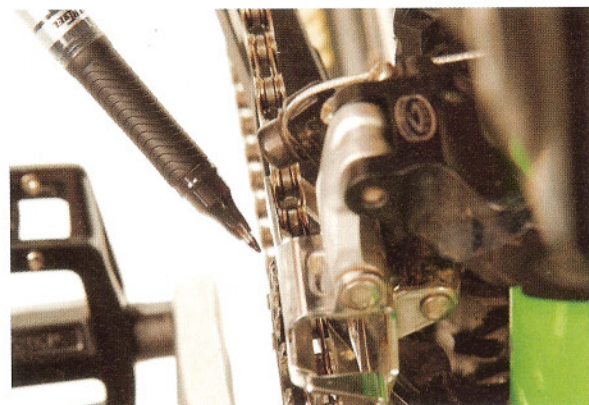
Douse stiff mechs with penetrating oil and force them through their range of movement to help free up the pivots

2 When it comes to the condition of cables, front mechs aren't as fussy as rear mechs, but a smooth flowing cable will help, so replace it if necessary.



3 Make sure the outer cage of the mech clears the outer ring by about 2mm in height. Adjust its height by loosening the mech's clamp and moving it up or down as appropriate. Tighten to 5-7Nm.

4 The outer cage of the mech needs to be parallel with the chainrings. Adjust its position by loosening the clamp just enough to allow the mech to be rotated straight. Tighten to 5-7Nm.

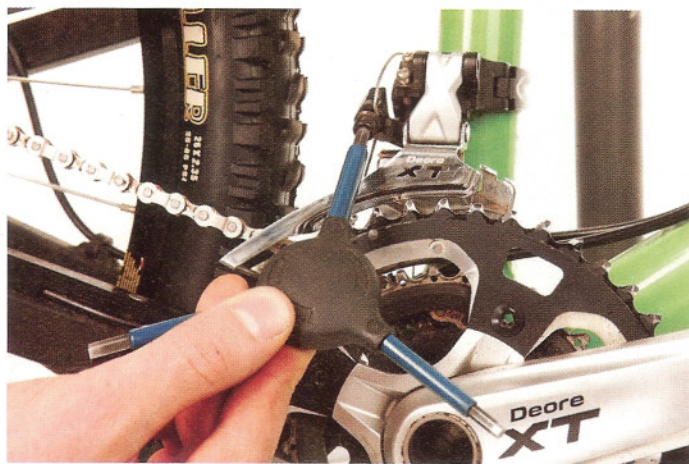


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5 Shift the bike into first gear (largest sprocket and smallest chainring) and unclamp the cable.

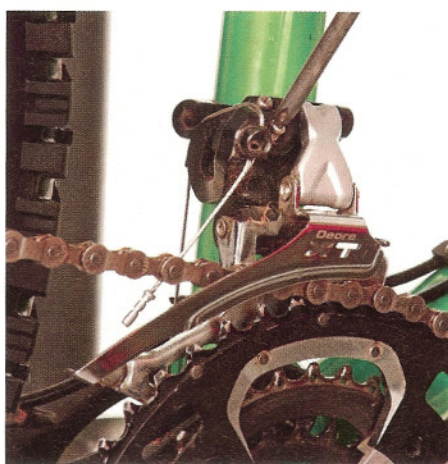


6 Wind the front shifter's barrel adjuster all the way in then back it out one turn.

7 Adjust the low stop (L) on the front mech until the inner plate just clears the chain.



8 Pull the front mech cable tight and secure with the clamp bolt (5-7Nm). Ensure the cable is routed through any guides on the mech and the frame correctly.



9 Shift into top gear (biggest chainring and smallest sprocket). If you can't shift into the big ring either there isn't sufficient cable tension or the high (H) stop is wound too far in. If this is the case, back off the high stop to allow the mech sufficient movement then increase the cable tension as required.

10 Once you're in top gear adjust the high stop until the outer edge of the mech just clears the chain.



11 Shift into the middle ring. If there is rubbing present, adjust the cable tension to move the mech in or out and fine-tune its position.



12 Shift through all possible gear combinations checking that the chain shifts quickly and smoothly across the chainrings without derailing and with the minimum of rubbing. Tweak the adjustments as necessary.

