

## Motorcycle Chain Maintenance & Adjustment – Printable Checklist

### Before You Begin

- Park bike on a **level surface**
- Place motorcycle in **neutral gear**
- Support bike upright with **center stand / paddock stand** (optional but recommended)
- Gather tools:
  - Tape measure or chain gauge
  - Wrench/socket set (for axle & adjusters)
  - Torque wrench
  - Chain cleaner + brush
  - Motorcycle-specific chain lube
  - Put on **work gloves**

### 1) Inspect Chain Condition

- Rotate rear wheel and check entire chain length for:
  - Rust or corrosion
  - Stiff or binding links
  - Severe dirt or debris
    - Inspect *sprocket teeth*:
  - No hooked ("shark-fin") shapes
  - No missing or broken teeth
    - Look for wear on rollers and side plates
    - If chain or sprockets are excessively worn, plan replacement (chain & sprockets as a set)

*Tip:* Inspect both **chain and sprockets together** — wear in one accelerates wear in the other.

### 2) Measure Chain Slack

- Find the midpoint between front and rear sprockets
- Gently push chain **upward** then **downward**
- Record vertical movement (free play)
- Compare with manufacturer's recommended slack (common: ~20–30 mm / 0.8–1.2 in)
- Check slack at **multiple points** (tightest spot governs)

 Chain should move smoothly with no excessive play  
 Too tight → binds bearings / stresses drivetrain  
 Too loose → risk of skipping, noise, or derailment

### 3) Chain Tension Adjustment

- Loosen **rear axle nut** just enough to move the wheel
- Loosen adjuster **lock nuts** on both sides
- Turn **adjuster bolts** in **equal increments** on each side:
  - Clockwise → tightens chain (pulls wheel back)
  - Counter-clockwise → loosens chain (pushes wheel forward)
    - After each adjustment, **re-measure slack**
    - Repeat until chain slack is within spec

 Make adjustments in small steps — don't over-tighten.

#### 4) Wheel Alignment

- Use swingarm alignment marks, tape, or straightedge
- Ensure **both sides match** — misalignment causes uneven wear
- Verify chain path looks straight from front to rear
- Check alignment again **after** setting tension

*Tip:* Proper alignment helps handling, braking stability, and extends component life.

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#### 5) Torque & Lock

- After correct tension & alignment:
  - Torque **rear axle nut** to manufacturer spec
  - Tighten **adjuster lock nuts** securely
    - Re-check slack one last time after torquing
    - Replace any cotter pins or safety fasteners removed earlier

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#### 6) Cleaning & Lubricating

- Clean chain with a **chain cleaner or degreaser**
- Use a small brush to remove stuck debris
- Wipe chain dry
- Spray or apply **chain-specific lubricant**:
  - Inner side (contact area with sprockets)
  - Spin rear wheel slowly while applying
    - Wait 10–15 minutes for lube penetration
    - Wipe off excess to prevent grit buildup

*Note:* Do **not** use engine oil or household oils — they lack proper lubrication properties.

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#### 7) Final Safety Check

- Spin rear wheel by hand — smooth motion
- No binding, catching, or uneven resistance
- No chain rubbing against guards or sliders
- Sprockets and chain move in harmony