

YOUR GUIDE TO CLICKERS

Welcome to Transmoto's entry-level suspension guide, aimed squarely at riders who've never threatened a fork leg or shock reservoir with a screwdriver.

MARTIN CHILD NICK DOLE

It's a crazy thought but in an ideal world, your bike would have no suspension. Why? Because the movement of both fork and shock affects wheelbase and geometry, which, in itself, affects handling. But bumpy terrain is what riding off-road is all about, so it's important you not only embrace your suspension, but learn to love and trust it, too.

Getting the perfect set-up can be a costly and time-consuming activity. Luckily, just a few clicks here and there on your stock suspension can make a world of difference. That's why they have

the adjustment, after all.

Okay, that's great if you know what you're doing. But what happens if you don't know rebound from retreads, compression from commotion or spring rates from starting gates? Normally, a technical article about suspension set-up would go into so much detail that you'd become a square-eyed page flicker before you can say 'fork that!' So let's try a different tack...

We're aiming for 80% knowledge here and the simplicity of a paper clip. So get that unused screwdriver out of the packet and prepare to improve the quality of your ride. ➔

THE BASICS

1



Let's begin with some home truths. If your fork legs are pitted, rusted, covered in oil or move with the smoothness of a plastic knife through rock, then we're both wasting our time here. Same goes for the shock. If your suspension's not in good working order, no amount of knob-twisting will help. Expect to pay around \$150 plus parts for an overhaul of your forks or shock.

Next up's a little more personal. Enjoy yourself at Christmas, eh buddy? A bit too much beer and beef? Modern off-riders are designed around a certain weight rider. For MX, the springs are aimed at a 75kg pilot; for enduro, it's 85kg (and don't forget the weight of your riding kit). So if Homer Simpson is your true sporting idol, best get your bike resprung. The cost of too much of the good life? Around \$180 (each end) for the springs, and \$250 for a re-valve to suit.

TO THE TOOLS

2

Sag affects all the good things in life and your bike's no different. Before you head out and show that track who's boss, take time to set the static and rider sag.

Static sag is the drop in height of the bike caused by its own weight. Put the bike on a stand so the wheels don't touch the ground. This is the fully extended position of both the fork and shock. Take a measurement from both axle centres to a fixed point on the bike – axle to handlebar at the front and axle to a mark on the fender at the rear. Then drop the bike off the stand and measure the same marks again. The difference is the static sag and is usually about 10% of the total travel (actual measurement found in your

owners manual or the 'Net). Then take a third measurement with you sitting on the bike, fully geared. The difference between fully extended and under the weight of your lard arse is the rider sag, normally about 30% of the total travel. If your bike is outside these figures, then the preload adjusters are your friends. Remember that the preload only alters the ride height and static sag and does nothing to affect the spring's rate. The fork's preload adjusters (if your bike has them) are normally the hexagonals on top of the leg that you wind in for more or out for less. On the shock, it's the cast-lead collar under the spring that is turned with a special tool – one that never ever resembles a long screwdriver and hammer!



A is the fully extended measurement, B is the Static Sag and C the Rider Sag.

TO THE BATMOBILE

3

Compression clicker is the centre screw. The bottom screw is the air-bleed.



It's nearly time for you and your sagged-up ride to conquer the world. But take a moment to think of what it is about your suspension that's missing. Many riders fiddle with their knobs (we're still talking suspension – focus!) just because they're there and not because of a particular problem. If you're happy with how your bike handles, the best advice is to leave it as it is and enjoy the ride.

Most suspension units can be adjusted in two different ways, though compression can have high- and low-speed settings. Compression (controls the rate that the unit

contracts) is altered by the clicker adjuster, which can be either at the top or bottom of the fork (check manual), but always on the top of the shock. Rebound (controls the rate at which the unit extends) will be the other.

Now we know where the clickers are, what do they do? They simply act like a tap. Fully closed, they stop the flow and full open, they don't. Typically, a clicker will have 24 'clicks' of movement, though the usable range is normally between four and 20 clicks out. All measurements are taken from the clickers being fully screwed in.

THE TEST

4



Shock adjustment showing high- (silver) and low-speed (red) compression.

As you'll gain the most amount of time by going faster on a high-speed corner, your test circuit area shouldn't be too tight and technical. Many riders place a tie-wrap around the fork stanchion (the shiny bit!) to see if they're getting the full range of movement out of the unit. This is fine, but hitting a sharp-edge hard can skew this reading and make you think you're using more travel than you do for 99% of your riding. As suspension set-up is always going to be a compromise, it's best to find a setting that works for the majority of time rather than on one particular section. With just two clicks to be enough to feel the difference on decent suspension, the best advice is to start at the front of the

bike (as the handlebars are directly mounted to them and your hands) with rebound and then compression before heading to the rear rebound and compression. Make sure you've noted the starting values of the units so you can periodically return to them as a reference.

After you've followed the chart (on the next page), you should have a clearer idea of how the clickers affect the bike and how to feel the direction of change when adjusting.

Now you have a basic understanding of your bike's suspension, you'll be more in control, less worn out and having a lot more fun than ever before. Job done, so go out and have more fun! 🏍️



COMPONENT	YOUR CLICKER SETTINGS	WHERE TO TEST	PROBLEM	CAUSE	CLICKER SOLUTION	COMMENTS
FORK REBOUND	From fully closed	Jump take-off (lipped)	Bars push back/clunk	TOO SOFT	WIND IN
		Through flat turn	No front wheel grip	TOO HARD	WIND OUT
FORK COMPRESSION		On jump landing	Feel/hear clunk	TOO SOFT	WIND IN
		In high-speed corners	Front wheel runs wide	TOO HARD	WIND OUT
SHOCK REBOUND		Over whoops	Saddle kicks every bump	TOO SOFT	WIND IN
		In braking bumps	Saddle kicks once at end	TOO HARD	WIND OUT
SHOCK COMPRESSION		On jump landings	Bike scrapes footpegs	TOO SOFT	WIND IN
		Driving through whoops	Back-end swaps around	TOO HARD	WIND OUT