

Chain Lube

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I've tried just about every chain lube there is...well, I was going to try boiling the chain in wax, but I decided that was not going to work very well. Some are "wet" lubes that "attract" dirt (dirt tends to accumulate on the chain). Some are "dry" lubes that "shed" dirt. The holy grail is a long lasting chain lube that keeps your chain running quiet and clean. The best one I've found out there was **ProLink**. Not only is it fairly clean, but you can put on a little extra and clean the chain, often avoiding the need to degrease it.

I have several bikes, and when you maintain them all, you end up using a lot of chain lube. I finally got sick of buying those expensive little bottles at the bike shop, so I did some looking.

At first, I was looking for a huge container of ProLink, and you can actually buy it in a 32oz container. And ProGold, another lube by the same company, even comes in **containers up to 55 gallons!** I don't know how that'd work on a bike chain, though.

What I eventually did is brew my own. Yup, I made my own chain lube. I made a single batch about two years ago, and I still have a ton left over.

The ingredients I used -- one quart of synthetic motor oil, and one gallon of odorless mineral spirits.



I poured one quart of mineral spirits out into another container for **later use**, and poured in the quart of synthetic oil. I replaced the cap, shook it up, and refilled about five of those little lube bottles I had hanging around my garage using a plastic funnel (the caps pop out for easy refilling).

The idea is the mineral spirits thin the oil so it can get into the chain's rollers, where it needs to be. It will then evaporate, leaving just the right amount of oil behind.

A bonus is this works as a great cleaner, too. I'll saturate the chain, spin it around about 30 times or so, and then wipe it clean. It's best to let the bike sit for a while to let the mineral spirits evaporate. I'll probably lube the chain every other ride, and certainly before any big ride I do.

Lubing your chain often is key to keeping it clean when you use a "wet" lube. Since this stuff has oil in it, it certainly will attract dust and grime well. However, if you lube and wipe down the chain often

(wipe it all off, the important stuff is in the rollers), it will never build up and get very dirty. If you let it go too long, you'll get a black yucky chain, and black yucky chainrings to match. This was true when I was using TriFlow, too, which is also a wet lube.

So there you go - home brew chain lube. If you've got a better formula, let me know! Maybe I'll switch when I run out of this stuff in 2010.

PROS: Cheap, works well, helps keep chain clean, you'll never run out

CONS: Attracts dirt more than "dry" lube, requires frequent use and drying time for best results, friends may make fun of you