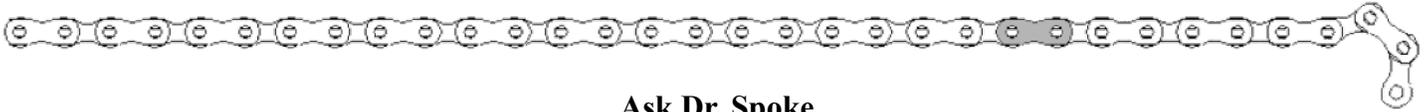


The Freewheel



Ask Dr. Spoke

Dear Dr. Spoke,

What are the benefits of using wax on bicycle chains?

Lucy Nichols



To Wax or Not to Wax

The Pros and Cons of Wax vs. Traditional Chain Lubes
Dr. Spoke speaks on squeaky chains

Pros:

- Wax does not retain attract road grime on the chain while virtually all conventional lubes do.
- Wax retains water-repellant properties longer than almost all lubes contrary to product claims.
- As paraffin for canning purposes, wax is readily available in all grocery stores.
- Wax is VERY inexpensive and goes a loooong way.
- When the chain needs to be handled such as when removing the rear wheel, your hands don't get grimy.
- Cycling shorts stay clean longer when you don't have to wipe grease off your hands after fixing a flat on the rear tire when on a ride.
- The chain looks clean and bright even after hundreds of miles of riding.
- The rider never arrives home with the black chain tattoo on her/his right calf.

Cons:

- The entire drive train should be thoroughly cleaned before waxing, which can be time consuming.
- A means of melting the wax is needed. A small inexpensive crockpot works best. Heating in a pot, even a double boiler on the stove, is not safe because wax is flammable.
- A step-by-step process should be followed; while not difficult, is recommended for optimum results.*
- You will get annoyed hearing everyone else's squeaky chain.
- On a sunny day fellow cyclists might complain about being blinded by your bright chain. They may become jealous and ostracize you from the oily-chain faction of the club. It's just another cycling risk.

* With photos, this process will be detailed in the next issue of Dr. Spoke. In the meantime, write to Dr. Spoke with your experience in lubricating bicycle chains. In particular, tell the doctor the brand and source of your favorite chain lube. Describe why you prefer that particular brand.