

## Clean Start

*Melancholy is incompatible with bicycling.*

- James E. Starrs

*Or even cleaning one.*

- Jeff Dieffenbach

### What you need

Cleaning a bicycle is a matter of having a relatively few key items (which sound, upon further some reflection, as if they might be elements of an amorous but slightly offbeat romantic evening) and only a moderate space in which to work. I call this particular approach the Landry's Method as I finagled it from a generous and talkative bicycle technician at Landry's Bicycles on Route 9 in Natick MA during some minor work on my ride. Apologies to Landry's for any variations that I've introduced that fail to stay true to what I was being taught.





- **“Wheel table”**  
My Workmate 200 is perfect



- **“Bike stand”**  
Finally putting my Nordic Trak to good if jury-rigged use (how this works will become clear)

## Keep in mind

The overarching philosophy and sequence of the Landry’s Method is several-fold.

- Use the degreaser to clean the frame, rims, crank set, and cassette, as dirt on these parts will transfer to the components.
- Keep the degreaser off the components (derailleurs, brakes, chain)
- Use the lubricant to service the components.
- Keep the lubricant off the frame and rims (lubed rims not ideal for those who like to stop)

## Getting dirty

### *Clean the frame*

1. Mount the bicycle on the stand (see photo on following page).
2. Remove the wheels, both to get them out of the way and to prepare for cleaning them.
3. Spray degreaser on the frame, taking care to keep it away from the components.
4. Use a cloth to clean/polish the frame (I use a total of 3 cloths at each cleaning: one for the frame and rims, one for the cassette, and one for the chain).



(Ready admission: a real bike stand would not only work much better, but look much more professional in these pictures. Fortunately, my parents still get me birthday presents.)

### *Clean the cassette*

Two options for cleaning the cassette: if you have a Workmate or similar, you can set the wheel up vertically or horizontally. Without a Workmate, you'll need to find a way to set the wheel horizontally.



1. No fluids for this one. Instead, get a second cloth and fold it once to create a "knife edge."
2. Slide the rag back and forth through each gap between the gears (see photo next page), starting with the smallest and working down/in. The cassette will rotate when sliding one way and then ratchet the other, working dirt out with each pass.



### *Clean the rims*

With the cassette clean, it's time to clean the rims.

1. With the wheel braced (vertical in the Workmate is best), spray the degreaser on the rim, covering about 1/3 of the circumference, and being careful not to get any degreaser on the cassette.
2. Use the (first) frame cloth (not the one you used on the cassette) to polish the rim. Repeat for the remaining 2/3 of the circumference, then clean the front rim the same way.



### *Clean the crank set*

Similar to the way that you clean the cassette, use the first cloth to clean the crank set. If you are ambitious, you can use a crank removal tool to slide the crank set out for easier cleaning. The scales below are misleading—the crank removal tool is much smaller than the crank set! [grin]



*Clean the derailleur pulley gears*

Use the screwdriver to clean dirt off of the two pulley gears.



*Lubricate the derailleurs*

Using the spray lubricant, spray a small amount on the derailleur pivot points, moving the derailleurs by hand to work the lubricant in.

*Lubricate the brake mechanisms*

Again using the spray lubricant, spray a small amount on the brake pivot points, then squeeze the brakes a few times to work the lubricant in.

*Lubricate and clean the chain*

The final step is to lubricate and clean the chain.

1. Put both wheels back on.
2. Using the spray lubricant, and being as careful as possible not to hit anything but the chain, spray the chain for about two complete rotations of the chain.
3. Get a third (new) cloth and wrap it loosely around the chain.
4. Spin the pedals with one hand while holding the cloth with mild pressure using the other.
5. Continue spinning the pedal, adjusting the cloth position, to get the chain as clean as possible.

**Go for a ride**