



# Bicycle Handlebar Tape Replacement

Replace worn handlebar tape on a bicycle to decrease the chance of accidents and ensure a safe, comfortable ride.

Written By: Madison Touchton



## INTRODUCTION

The handlebars are one of the main points of contact between a cyclist and his or her bicycle and serve as the primary means of controlling the bicycle, housing the controls for such essential functions as steering and braking. A cyclist's ability to comfortably operate these mechanisms for extended periods of time is of the utmost importance. Old, worn out handlebar tape may pose a danger to cyclists because, with no barrier between the bicycle's controls and the harsh elements, brake cables may become damaged; also, the cyclist may be put at a greater risk of developing blisters. With the brakes inoperable and the cyclist's palms blistered, the chances of the cyclist losing control of the bicycle and getting into an accident skyrocket. New, properly wrapped bar tape both provides a cushion between the cyclist's hands and the rough surface of the handlebars and shields the brake cables from the elements, decreasing the chances of accidents and ensuring a more comfortable and safe ride.

## TOOLS:

- **Bicycle workstand** (1)

*Optional*

- **Handlebar tape kit** (1)

*Including unused role of adhesive cork handlebar tape and strips of electrical tape*

- **Utility Scissors** (1)

## Step 1 — Handlebar Tape



- Have someone hold the bicycle and handlebars steady throughout the fix.
- If you have a workstand, use that to secure the bicycle.
- Roll back the brake hood cover on one of the handlebars.
- Pop out the bar plug at the end of the handlebar.

## Step 2



- ⓘ Typically, electrical tape is used to secure loose brake cables to the handlebars, then handlebar tape is wrapped around the entire handlebar, above the electrical tape, to create a cushion between the cyclist's hands and the handlebar.
- ⓘ The average handlebar tape kit will include at least two rolls of handlebar tape and at least two strips of electrical tape.
- Peel off the old handlebar tape entirely.
- After removing the old handlebar tape, the old electrical tape securing the brake cables will be revealed.
- Remove the old electrical tape if it is not satisfactorily securing the brake cables.
- Apply new electrical tape to secure the brake cables.

## Step 3



- Cut one two-inch strip of bar tape from the roll, or use one of the two short strips found in the handlebar tape kit.
- Peel off the adhesive backing of the two-inch strip and affix it to the handlebar behind the brake lever clamp.

## Step 4



- Peel off a few feet of the adhesive backing on the roll of new bar tape.
- Affix the center of the end of the tape to the edge of the drop bar so that half of the width of the tape hangs over the end of the bar.
- Begin to snugly wrap the tape up the handlebar, pulling the tape up and over the handlebar toward the bicycle.
  - As you wrap, peel off more adhesive backing as needed and overlap each new layer of tape by one half of its width.
  - When wrapping the tape around curves in the handlebars, allow for more overlap on the inside of the curve and less overlap on the outside of the curve.

## Step 5



- Upon reaching the break lever clamp, wrap the tape under and around the handlebar, past the clamp.
- Continue wrapping towards the stem, pulling the tape up and over toward the back of the bicycle.

## Step 6



- Upon reaching the point at which you would like the bar tape to end (typically a couple of inches out from the stem), cut the tape at a steep angle (greater than 45 degrees) toward the end of the bar.
- Finish wrapping the last few inches of bar tape.

**(i)** Optional: Wrap a few layers of electrical tape around the end of the handlebar tape at the middle of the bar to decrease the chances of the handlebar tape peeling off.

## Step 7



- Roll the brake hood cover back down over the newly-wrapped tape.
- Tuck the overhanging tape at the end of the bar into the plughole and push the bar plug back in.

**★** Repeat all previous steps for the other handlebar.

Repeat all steps to replace the old handlebar tape on the other handlebar.