

# WORKSHOP

Saving you money on essential bike maintenance



**BRUCE DUNN**  
MCN's expert technician

**BRUCE SAYS**

**'They've come a long way'**

Believe it or not, heated grips have been in existence since the early 1980s, but back then they were clumpy and a bit ineffective. But not any more... we are in a golden age of kit, and aftermarket heated grips are almost indistinguishable from normal grips, plus boast a range of features to fit your needs and styles to suit your bike.

Most manufacturers offer heated grips as part of their accessories list, which will, of course, fit perfectly. However, these often come at a gobsmacking price – we're talking a couple of hundred quid or more, especially if you get the dealer to fit them. But heated grips market-leaders, Oxford Products, offer a whole range of Hot Grips to suit different styles of machines, costing from around just £60.

Whichever grips you choose, I'd suggest opting for a set that come with a separate heat controller to allow you to vary the temperature. And, more importantly, choose a system with a battery saving mode – without this, you risk discharging your bike's battery if you forget to turn them off after a ride.



A simple kit for toasty-warm hands

## Winter warmers

Fitting quality heated grips will help keep you riding for longer



**BRUCE'S TIPS**

First identify which heated grip is the throttle side

**1 Get the right grips for you**  
These days, there's no need to have cold hands while you ride, as there's a whole world of heated grips. Ideally, opt for a set with a remote off/on button and selectable heat settings. A low voltage cut-out feature, to prevent the battery discharging if you forget to turn them off, is also nice to have. First, unpack the contents of the kit and check it's all there.



**3 Lift, twist and spray**  
Once you're satisfied the grips will fit both sides, next remove the original grips. Take a long thin screwdriver and gently tease it under the edge of the grip then spray a brake cleaner in between. Move the screwdriver around and keep spraying the cleaner. It will dissolve any glue and lubricate the inside of the grip and help it pull off easily. Repeat on other grip.



**BRUCE'S TIPS**

Make sure there is enough slack in the wires at full throttle and off positions

**2 Start losing weight**  
Remove the bar-end weights using an Allen key or screwdriver, along with any other bar-mounted accessories, such as lever guards or bark busters. With the weights removed, check the length of the heated grips side by side with the original grips – they should be the same; if they differ, refer to the instructions to see if they can be trimmed.



**4 Banish any barriers**  
Some throttle tubes feature raised plastic ribs to help prevent the original grip slipping, but these will often prevent you from sliding the heated grip on. The good news is, you can usually file or cut away some of the rib until the heated grips slide into place. Make sure all traces of glue are removed with a strong solvent, such as a carb cleaner or brake cleaner.



**5 Sort the throttle first**  
Think about the best way to route the wire. Keep in mind that the throttle is moving all of the time so the wire must not catch or bind. Once you're happy, fit the grip using the supplied glue, if necessary, then check the final position allows the throttle to operate smoothly.



**7 Connect the power**  
Gain access to the battery. We are going to make sure the grips work before routing the loom neatly out of sight. There will be usually two wires from the loom, a positive and negative, one of which will have an inline fuse. Connect the loom's terminals to the battery.



**9 Make it a tidy job**  
Start tidying the wires, you are aiming to integrate them alongside the existing loom. You may need to undo some existing cable ties and bands to do this. Run the wires from the battery alongside a main loom that goes to the front of the bike – you might have to lift the petrol tank to do this. Also, make sure you still have relatively easy access to the inline fuse holder.



**6 Position the controller**  
Think about where you're going to fit the control unit; it needs to be somewhere that can be easily accessed while you're riding. This Oxford kit comes with a bracket that raises the box above the clutch lever bracket, and it fitted here with no issues.



**8 Check for light and warmth**  
Connect the controller and grips then turn on the ignition to check everything's working. Make sure the grips get warm and that the controller varies the heat levels. Check once again that the throttle is smooth and not binding – do this for both left and right full lock.



**10 Don't risk a snag**  
Carefully tidy the wires around the handlebars, checking that they don't stretch or get pulled when the handlebars turn at full lock both ways. Pay particular attention to the throttle grip cable, ensure that it is free to return and not likely to get pinched by the front brake lever. Then switch on, head out on a test ride and enjoy having warm hands.

## MECHANIC'S WAR STORIES

### 'The chain had been whacked hard with a hammer'

Heavy-handed DIY caused MoT failure

When an eight-year-old Triumph Speed Triple came in for an MoT it looked pretty clean. But as soon as Stourbridge Motorcycle Centre boss John Birchill took a closer look, he realised there was no way it would pass.

John explains: "There are three designs of link to join two ends of a drive chain; small capacity bikes have a split link with a clip, then there are two types of riveted links for higher-performance bikes, with either solid, or hollow pins, also known as 'hard' and 'soft'."

Most chains use the hard link design where the ends of the pins are peened over to resemble a mushroom top and hold the sideplate in place. Ideally you would use a chain riveting tool, although you can get away with gentle strikes from a hammer with a heavier hammer pressed against the back of the link.

But the DID chain on the Triumph uses the hollow link

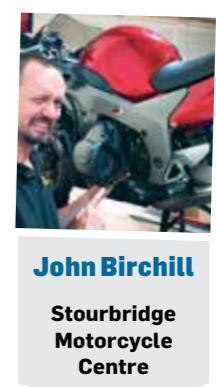


**WHAT IT SHOULD LOOK LIKE**



The pins had started to peel and come apart

get problems such as stiff links. "But this rider had set about the link with a hammer and applied the same force as for a solid pin. But because the hollow pins are softer, the repeated strikes had caused them to become brittle and there was a genuine risk that the chain could have snapped with serious consequences."



**John Birchill**  
Stourbridge Motorcycle Centre