



*Top Notch Bicycle Frames*

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### Care and feeding of your Soulcraft frame and fork

It can never be said too many times: Steel rusts. Soulcraft frames and forks are steel. Soulcraft frames and forks can rust (see transitive property of equivalency). We've spent a lot of time figuring out ways to make our frames more rust/corrosion resistant: sealed tubes, forward-facing seat tube slots, stainless braze-ons, blind water bottle bosses, double-coat powder paint with phosphate pre-treatment, rust inhibitor inside the seat tubes, and o-rings seals for your seat post, to name a few. Alas, there needs to be a certain amount of responsibility on your part to help make your frame last.

The single worst thing we see is corrosion inside the seat tube. Yes, water will get inside there and if you ride in the rain or there is significant moisture being flung off your rear tire and onto your seatpost, then here's what you need to do: After wet rides, remove your seat post and turn your bike upside down to drain and dry. Pay attention and watch how much water runs out. Let it dry for at least a few hours before you grease and re-install your seatpost. After every 2 or 3 times you do this you should re-apply some sort of rust inhibitor like [LPS #3](#) or [Weigle's Frame Saver](#). Spray the stuff liberally into the seat tube, then wrap a rag around the antenna you broke off your neighbor's [Impala](#). Spray the rag with rust inhibitor, then insert the antenna with the rag on it into the seat tube and push up and down to coat the walls of the tube. Use a flashlight to see if you've got everything covered and to periodically check things out. For dry conditions re-apply once every 4-6 months. We use the LPS stuff here and every frame has a bunch of this sprayed into the seat tube when it leaves the shop. This will keep you safe for a while but after that you're on your own.

To help you even further, every Soulcraft frame comes with a little black [o-ring](#) which looks like a rubber band. It goes around your seat post and should be slid down against the top of the seat post clamp. We've seen these o-rings sitting a bit above the seat clamp on some customer's bikes and if there is **any** gap between the o-ring and seat clamp, you may as well not have the o-ring on there. The purpose of the o-ring is to create a seal around your seatpost to help keep water from seeping into your seat tube. Make sure there is a little grease on the o-ring so it creates a better seal and keeps the o-ring pliable. A hot tip is to spin the o-ring as you push it down against the seat clamp. This will help it "seat" better. When you're finished there should be a little grease barrier

built up on the seam, much like you would see with the caulk around the edges of your bath tub or shower. Also, wipe a little grease into the seat tube slot after your post height is set; that will help keep water from working its way into the seat tube. If you don't have an o-ring or lost it or whatever, just go to your local hardware store or auto supply and ask for a #20 O-ring. That should do it. You can actually do this for any bike you own. Also, if you are using a 27.2 seat post shim (supplied with most Soulcraft frames), make sure the shim slot is positioned slightly offset with the frame slot (put shim slot at 11 o'clock). This will prevent water from seeping into the seat tube.

Sweat is another thing to watch out for. Obviously you're going to sweat on your frame, hopefully while riding it. Some people have what we call "toxic sweat" which can eat its way right through even the most durable paint. If you ride your bike on a stationary trainer you are asking for trouble. The sweat just drops straight down and sits on, and more specifically under, the tubes of your frame. Take whatever precautions you must to keep sweat off your frame on a stationary trainer (we are currently out of stock of the Flash Dance headbands). Make sure you wipe the frame down afterwards with some type of cleaner like Simple Green and make sure it's dry! Same goes for general riding. You'll get way more life out of your frame if you wipe it down after a ride and get all the sweat off. Problem areas are any sharp edges like the top and bottom of the head tube, braze-ons, and anywhere you see bare metal. Rubbing cables can wreak havoc on paint and actually wear away metal, so put pieces of chopped up clear chainstay protector on those areas to protect them. The most common problem areas are the sides of the head tube where your derailleur cables sit.

On forks the biggest problem area is the steerer because it's unpainted. When assembling your bike, a light coating of grease should be applied to the full length of the steerer, even where the stem clamps. It's a good idea to periodically remove the fork and re-grease the steerer. Sweat can work its way under the stem and underneath the bearing cap and if left to sit for long periods will damage the steerer. Any rust should be removed with Scotchbrite or fine sandpaper and re-coated with grease. If rust has caused severe pitting the steerer may be damaged to the point of becoming unsafe to use.

Keep in mind that if you ever call us saying your frame or fork has rusted to the point of needing tubes replaced, we will [not warranty it](#). Sometimes things rust despite your best efforts but you need to take care of it right away or call us for the best way to deal with it. A tip for scratches that go down to bare metal is to visit the touch-up paint section at your local auto parts store or model/hobby supply. They have a wide selection of colors and it's your best bet to match the powder paint on your Soulcraft (powder paint is baked on at 400 degrees so there isn't any touch-up paint available).

For all you folks with Soulcraft frames that have the Paragon Slider or Soulcraft Rocker singlespeed dropouts, throw a little "blue" [LocTite 242](#) on the threads of the mounting bolts. This will help keep them tight. Never use anything bigger than a 160mm rotor on any frame or fork we make. They are not designed to deal with the bigger torque loads and brake geometry of the bigger rotors.

Check your equipment for cracks on a regular basis. We have a great track record for durability, but sometimes things break. One of the great things about steel is that it cracks well before it completely fails, so with regular attention you can prevent a catastrophic failure of your frame or fork. Check around the welds of your frame and

fork every week if you ride more than 4 times a week and every 2 or 3 weeks if you ride less. Places to pay special attention to:

- Around the head tube area on the top and down tube.
- At chain suck marks on the right chainstay.
- Around disc mounts on frame or fork.
- Fork legs near the bend or top of the crown.

This is probably a good time to mention what is covered and not covered under our “warranty”. We use quotes there because we like to judge each case as it comes. If we made a mistake or flubbed something, we will cover it. If you caused the problem, we don’t cover it. That being said, here are some things we absolutely will not cover:

- Rust damage
- Crash damage
- Chain suck damage (jamming of the chain between crank and frame)
- Abuse, such as riding your hardtail like a full suspension bike, or reliving your BMX days by jumping or doing big drops.
- Using rotors larger than 160mm on our frames or forks.

Bottom line is that Soulcraft frames and forks are built to be ridden hard, but not with reckless abandon. Use common sense and treat your equipment with care and respect!

Let’s review:

- Keep your frame clean and wipe it down often.
- Address scratches and spots where paint may be rubbed off.
- Properly install seat post “o” ring.
- Grease seat post well and keep a grease barrier around the top and in the slot.
- Drain water from seat tube after wet rides.
- Reapply rust inhibitor often or as conditions require.
- Check for cracks.

Happy Trails,

Sean Walling  
Soulcraft