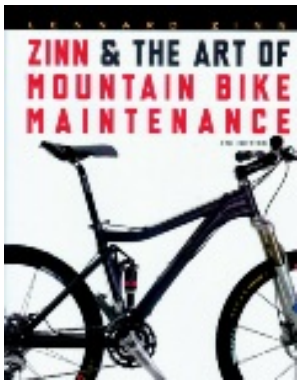

Zinn & The Art of Mountain Bike Maintenance
Extracts from Chapter 4 – CHAIN SUCK

Chain suck occurs when the chain does not release from the bottom of the chainring and pulls up rather than running straight to the lower rear-derailleur jockey wheel. The chain will come around and get "sucked" up by the inner or middle chainring until it hits the chainstay. Sometimes the chain becomes wedged between the chainstay and chainring.

A number of things can cause chain suck. To eliminate it, try the simplest methods first.

- Clean and lube the chain and clean the chainrings to see if it improves; a rusty chain will take longer to slide off the chainring than will a clean, well lubed chain.
- Check for tight (or stiff) links by watching the chain move through the derailleur jockey wheel as you slowly turn the crank backwards. Loosen stiff links by flexing them side to side with your thumbs and fingers.
- If chain suck persists, check that there are no bent or torn teeth on the chainring. Try straightening any broken or torn teeth you find with pliers or filing away rough, bent-over edges.
- If your chain still sucks, try another chain with wider spacing between link plates (if it too narrow, it can pinch the chainring). You can use a measuring caliper to compare link spacing of various chains.
- Another approach is to replace the inner (and perhaps middle) chainring with a thin stainless steel (or shiny chromed) chainring. The thin, slick rings will release the chain more easily.
- Increase the rear derailleur's pivot-spring (p-spring) tension so it will increase the tension on the lower run of the chain as it comes off the bottom of the chainring.
- If the problem still persists, a new chainring or an anti-chain suck device that attaches under the chainstays may help. Ask your bike shop about what is available.

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