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tech: Frameskin Application Guide

SHOW YOUR BIKE THAT YOU LOVE IT (AND PRESERVE THE RESALE VALUE TOO) WITH A FRAMESKIN KIT. HERE'S HOW.

Mountain bikes cop a fair beating from a wide range of things including chainslap, trail debris, transport and high speed over the bars crashes, not the mention the constant rub of cables on the frame and fork. Without protection, it really doesn't take long for your fresh, beautiful ride to end up looking beaten, tatty and sad. Over the years we've used combinations of various materials to minimise damage (old tubes, stick-on felt, small marsupials)

but there hasn't been an off the shelf product that covers all bases. Enter Frameskin. Frameskin is an Australian product, made right here in Canberra, from a premium paint protection film specifically engineered to be resistant to abrasion, humidity, salt spray and UV exposure. The frame kits are custom-shaped to suit each bike model and consist of a set of decals to cover all the high wear areas of your bike. While not claiming to be a magical force-field, installing a Frameskin

kit proves to be a light, neat and effective way of preserving your bike's paint and preventing cables from rubbing through to the frame without impacting on the bike's aesthetics. Here's how to achieve a perfect application and protect your ride. NB. We're using the 'wet' method (which is recommended) but you can also apply the stickers using a 'dry' method. We prefer the wet method as it allows for some repositioning if the stickers are a little off.



FRAMESKIN TIPS

Fitting a Frameskin kit correctly takes time and patience, so for best results make sure you've got a fair amount of both before you start. Done well, Frameskin is very hard to see on a bike, so it pays to take your time.

While well labelled on the instructions, the location of some decals may not be in the same place on the decal sheet, so take time to make sure you are applying the correct decal.

Don't be discouraged if it doesn't fit perfectly without a few small bubbles here and there. This is the second kit we've fitted ourselves and despite some bubbles the first one is still going strong with hardly any lifting after a full year of riding and abuse.

You may get a tiny bit of lifting of decals over complex shaped tubing even if installed correctly. Don't let this worry you, as some shapes are almost

impossible to cater for. While each kit is specific to a model of bike the kits are not necessarily size specific. We were fitting the kit to an XL frame, which meant that some of the stickers weren't quite long enough to completely cover the tube. In these situations it's up to you to decide how to best fit the sticker. For example; the downtube sticker we started at the bottom bracket as this is where most of the stone chips and damage will occur,

which resulted in an unprotected patch at the by the headtube. The top tube sticker, however, we placed dead centre on the tube as most rub happens in the middle of the tube.

There are a bunch of extra stickers for cable rub areas. We also cut some leftover bits of film for the perfect fit. Just remember to cut a curved edge on the stickers as sharp corners are more likely to catch on things and lift easily.



ESSENTIAL ITEMS

- Frameskin kit (a detailed instruction diagram is included)
- Dishwashing liquid
- Bucket with hot water
- Isopropyl Alcohol or Methylated spirits
- Hair dryer
- Clean rag
- Squeegee (provided in kit)
- Bike work stand
- Sharp scissors
- A squirt bottle filled with clean water



1. FRAME PREPARATION

Take a look at how the cables run on your bike. Give the handlebars a turn and compress the suspension a few times and note where the cable housings and brake lines lay against the frame.

We're using a completely bare frame here as we're doing the application from new. If you're applying the kit to a bike that's assembled/used it will be easier to install if you remove the wheels (and cranks if you're handy). If your bike is dirty, give the frame a good clean. Have a look for any greasy deposits around the drivetrain, headset and bottom bracket area and clean these up with a bit of isopropyl alcohol sprayed on a rag. Grease is the enemy, and it will prevent Frameskin kit adhering properly if not removed. Dry off the frame completely. Put the bike in the stand and release the brake lines and pop the gear cables from their frame stops so they are not in the way when applying the decals.

Give the bike a final once over with isopropyl alcohol/methylated spirits and a clean rag.

Go and wash your hands well with soap – twice. Dirty or oily hands will negatively affect the adhesive.

Make sure the hair dryer is located within easy reach nearby. Be sure it will not accidentally fall in the bucket of water and electrocute you!



2. GETTING STARTED

Add a few drops of dishwashing liquid to a bucket of warm water (above). Make sure it's within easy reach of the bike for the following steps.

Start your application with something simple; we recommend the head tube decals as they are small and relatively flat. Or try the down tube decal because it's hidden when the bike is upright so it's less of a worry if it's not perfect. Once you've warmed up on these two and got the technique right, the rest will be much easier.



3. PEEL IT OFF

Use the squirt bottle to spray a mist of water onto the part of the bike you are going to apply the decal to. This will offer some re-positioning of the decal so you can get it in the right spot.

Wet your fingers, and peel the decal off the sheet. It helps to hold the decal by its edges to avoid touching the adhesive with your fingers (above).

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5. DECAL APPLICATION

Line the sticker up with its location and start by placing one end in contact with the frame. Slowly lay the decal down along its length so it's in position. If it isn't perfectly aligned, don't panic as the wet method allows

for some repositioning.

Note: Some long decals may have small notches at each end (left) which will help you to align it along the centre line of the tube (eg. top tube and down tube decals).



7. HEAT IT UP

Now it's time for some heat. Start at one end and make sure that all the water is gone and the end is stuck down. This will mean that the decal can't slide out of position as you work it baby! This is crucial, as you need one hand to hold the hair dryer in position as you work to press out the remaining water with the other hand.



4. WET THE DECAL

Before dipping it in the soapy water (above) hold the decal up to the bike so you can see how it fits. Dip the sticker into the soapy water and then let the excess water drain off.



6. GET RID OF BUBBLES

Once the decal is in place start by working along its length to push out any bubbles using the squeegee provided in the kit (above). You will also find that your thumbs and fingers are useful for this task.



8. CURVED SURFACES

For stickers that sit on mostly on a flat surface but also curve around the tube (eg the edges of the down tube or the on the chain stays) or we found it easiest to finish applying the flat part of the decal with the hair dryer first before heating the edges and rolling them over the curved part of the tube (two above images). This helps them stick better as well as the heated decal is more malleable and will conform much better to the tube shape before cooling into this new position. **AMB**

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