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MarkNet - KLR650



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WHEEL ALIGNMENT USING STRING

I believe I found this information in a magazine, possibly Cycle World, but I'm not sure because it's been a while. This is not my original work.

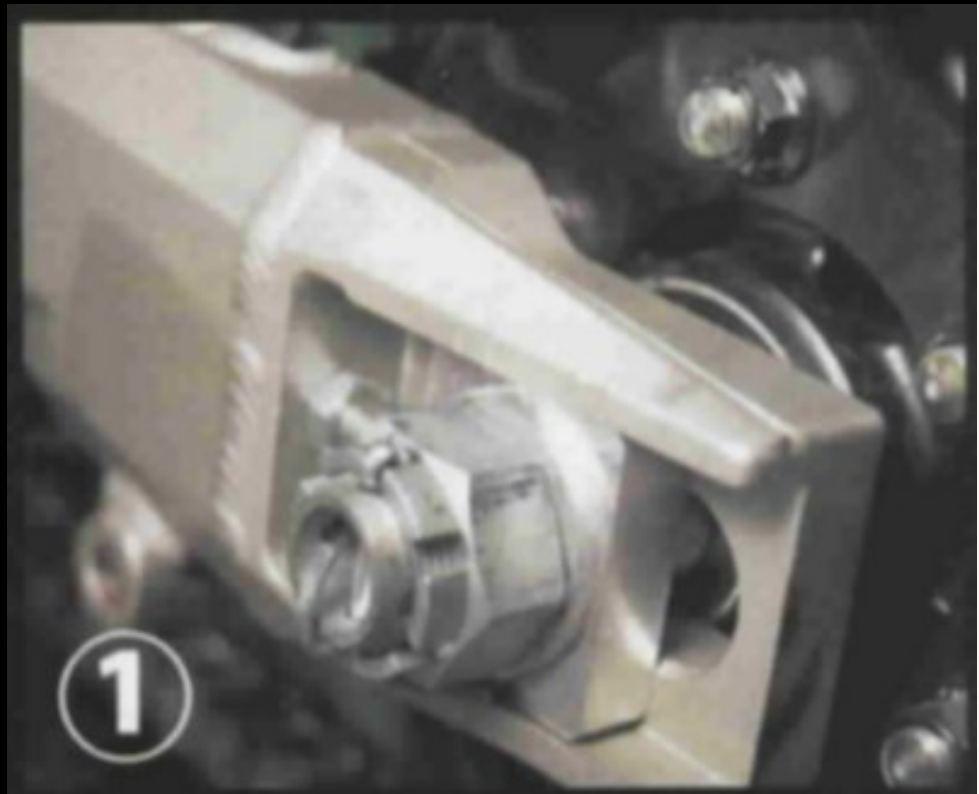
Here's some excellent information from Bill

You describe the "string" method of wheel alignment, a method I have used for years with great success, but what has always bothered me, about this method, is the amount of judgment required to "get it right". I have found that the KLR's swing arm is symmetric; the rear wheel rides dead center in it. To get flawless alignment, with no judgment required, I simply measure, (using a cheap plastic vernier caliper), from the outer edge of the swingarm to the outer edge of the rim and keep adjusting until the measurements are the same on both sides and the chain has the proper slack.

This method requires that the rim be true and that you remove the chain guard, however once you have gotten the desired alignment you can "recalibrate" the factory marks (if required). I recommend doing the measurements at several rim points to confirm wheel true.

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I added this page because the marks stamped on the swingarm can be, and probably are, inaccurate. I think someone on the DSN list suggested they had been made by a monkey with a rock and a chisel. (Grinning) (1)



Put the bike on a center stand, crate, or whatever. You'll need string, or some kind of thin line that is around 2.5 times the wheelbase of the bike - 12 feet should be plenty. Find the center of this length of string, and wrap it once around the most forward part of the front tire just below the axle. Now bring the string to the back of the bike, running it under your stand, crate, lift - whatever you used. Make sure the front tire is straight and in alignment with the body of the bike.

Lay down on the ground behind the bike. With a string in either hand, pull the sides tight against the sidewalls of the front tire, and sight along

it. The string may or may not touch the front tire sidewall due to the width of the rear tire, but you can check that the front tire actually is straight forward by the gaps between the string and sidewalls.

(2)

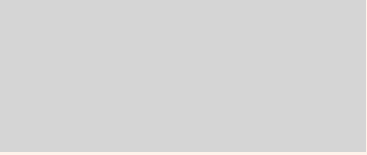
Now, pull the string to, and alongside, the forward sidewalls of the rear tire until it is just touching. Sight along the string and make sure that the gaps at the very rear of the front wheel are equal.

Check the gaps at the very rear of the back wheel. (3)



If the gaps are equal, you're square and good to go. More gap on one side than the other means that the wheel is cocked, and needs to be adjusted. Make a small adjustment to just one of the adjusters, and check again to see where you are. Once you have equal gaps, then you can adjust the chain tension. Mark one of the flat sides of each nut or bolt on either side of the swingarm, and then just move the adjusting nut or bolt an equal number of turns. (4)





As it turns out, the marks on my swingarms aren't that bad, and I can get the wheel pretty close using them. I do that first, and then a final alignment with string. And, that should do it for you.