

How to cut your own key

These steps show how to cut your own key if you've lost yours. I figured out how to do this after I lost my keys on a ride and the locksmith quoted me \$150-\$200 and up to a week turnaround (that kind of cash is a great motivator). I'm using my 76 F as an example, but I suspect that most of our bikes are similar. You'll need a new key blank and a Dremel with a 1/8" round bit (I used a straight side carbide) or a small round file (~1/8") and about an hour.

Remove the idiot light cover (or expose the lock assembly on your bike). At the base of the lock is a small screw which you need to remove. Mine was already missing so this step was easy.



Pull the lock straight off and you'll be left with the actual lock assembly.



Remove the cover and take the lock to anyplace that cuts keys and tell them you want a blank that fits. Buy a couple. I wound up with an ILCO blank number X181 HD90. It's a car key so it's a bit long, but it works.



Once you're back home and fortified with a good beer (I prefer my own homebrew) start removing the core. Apply light pressure to the back of the core, insert a thin screwdriver, flat piece of metal, or chunk of zip tie you found on the floor into the keyway and depress the pins front to back to remove the cylinder.



Be careful not to lose the pins or let them drop out of the cylinder- They're spring loaded and you want to keep them in the same order.



Insert your key blank fully and draw a line with a sharpie marker at the top of the cylinder.



Now, place the key up against the pins and align the mark with the top of the cylinder.

Mark the key with the position of each pin.



Now insert the key and notice how far the first pin protrudes. Take the Dremel and cut a notch in the bottom side of the key the depth that the pin protruded. Re-insert the key and check that the pin is now flush with the surface of the cylinder. Repeat the process for the other four pins.



Insert the key in the keyway, reassemble the lock and check that it rotates freely. Now cut identical notches on the other side of the key and test fit that side as well.



When you've cut the key correctly, it should look like this when the key is inserted.



Now install the cylinder, and insert the core on the bike (line up the indicator dot), install cover, set screw and idiot light cover.

Now go ride.

