



## GreaseSpot #14 – Cold Weather Engine Starting

The purpose of the 'GreaseSpot' is to share ideas and tips on 'two wheel vehicle' maintenance (Bicycle and Motorcycle). Questions, ideas and tips come from our fellow riders, and they can be on most any topic of maintenance. GreaseSpot #13 focused on 'Cold Weather Riding'; if you would like us to resend this GreaseSpot just let us know ([info@greaseninja.com](mailto:info@greaseninja.com)).

Most of us have had a difficult winter...record snow and low temperatures. Riding in the winter season has unique challenges as described in GreaseSpot #13, but one of the first steps in riding in cold weather is getting the motorcycle started, especially if the motorcycle has a few years on it.

Our personal experience is our motorcycles can be difficult to start as temperatures drop below 30 degrees Fahrenheit. We often find ourselves in the situation of starting the motorcycle on a cold morning even though the afternoon temperatures moderate into temps more comfortable. As far as we can tell, the **primary source of our problem is that the engine 'cranks over' too slow for a quick start**, (note: engine oil is 20-50W) and we feared draining the battery.

We tested two suggestions...(instead of relocating to a year round warm state: AZ, FL, CA, HI, etc.)

We tested the tip of placing a "60 watt work light" under the engine over night, the theory being the heat of the light bulb would be sufficient to keep the engine oil warm for easy cranking. Our test was done in a garage at a temperature of approximately 20 degrees Fahrenheit. We found little to no difference in the temperature of the engine or in the cranking speed of the engine. **This tip did not work for us.**

We tested the tip of placing a small "1200 watt ceramic" heater in front of the engine with the heat directed at the front of the engine case. In less than two (2) hours, the top of the engine case behind the cylinders showed a temperature rise of more than 25 degrees. Less time was required if we left the motorcycle cover on. The engine turned over as if it was summer time and fired right up. **This tip worked for us.** We are now using this tip with every cold morning start.