Bicycle Mechanic interview questions

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What to expect

Bicycle Mechanic interviews are practical and conversational. Employers want to see how you think through a fault, how you handle a customer who is worried about cost or safety, and whether your bench habits match the workshop's standards.

- **Technical and diagnostic:** Fault-finding on drivetrains, brakes, wheels and frames, often using a bike or component as a prompt.
- **E-bike systems:** Questions on motors, batteries, controllers and diagnostic software, given how much of the modern workshop involves e-bikes.
- **Customer-facing:** Scenarios about explaining repair options, timelines and costs to riders who may not know the terminology.
- **Safety and workshop practice:** Torque settings, test rides, battery handling and how you flag a bike that is not safe to return.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of a tricky repair, a mistake you caught, or a customer you turned around.

Expect a short introductory chat, then a practical or scenario-based section where you talk through a repair or a diagnosis. Some shops set a bench task such as adjusting gears or truing a wheel. The interview usually finishes with your questions about the workshop, tools and training.

1. Walk me through how you diagnose a drivetrain fault you can hear but cannot immediately see.

Why they ask

This is the core skill of the job. The interviewer wants to hear a logical sequence, not guesswork.

How to structure your answer

Use a step-by-step walk-through: start with the rider's description, then isolate the system, then confirm the fix with a test ride.

Example answer

“I start by asking the rider when the noise happens: every gear, only under load, or only when standing. Then I put the bike in the stand and spin the cranks by hand to listen and watch. If it is a clicking under load, I check chain wear first, then look at the cassette and chainrings for hooked teeth. If the chain is fine, I check derailleur alignment and the hanger, because a slightly bent hanger is a common cause that people miss. Once I think I have it, I adjust and then ride the bike outside under load, because some faults only show up on the road. I only hand it back when the noise is gone on that test ride.”

2. Tell me about a time you had to explain a repair to a customer who expected something different.

Why they ask

Customer advice is a big part of the role, especially when a rider thinks a repair is simple and it turns out to be bigger.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: the situation, what the customer expected, what you found, and how you resolved it.

Example answer

“A customer came in with a rear wheel that was rubbing and assumed it just needed a quick adjustment. When I put it on the stand, the rim was badly out of true and a couple of spokes were loose enough that I did not want to just tweak it and send them out. I showed them the wheel on the stand so they could see the wobble, explained that a proper truing job would hold, and gave them the option of a replacement wheel if the rim was too far gone. They chose the truing job. It took longer than they first expected, but they left understanding why, and they came back for their next service.”

3. A customer brings in an e-bike that cuts out under load. How do you approach it?

Why they ask

E-bike faults are increasingly common and the interviewer wants to see a safe, structured diagnostic approach.

How to structure your answer

Use a judgement-under-pressure structure: safety first, then isolate, then test, then explain.

Example answer

“First I make sure the battery is removed or isolated before I touch any connections, because I am not going to risk a short or a shock. Then I ask the rider when it cuts out: on hills, from a standing start, or after a certain amount of time. I connect the diagnostic software and check for stored error codes, which usually narrows it to the motor, controller or battery. If the codes point to a connection issue, I inspect and clean the contacts. If it looks like a battery fault, I test what I can and explain to the customer what the next step is, including whether the battery needs to go to a specialist. I do not guess on e-bike electrics, because the wrong call can cost the customer a lot.”

4. How do you decide what to quote a customer for a repair versus recommending a replacement?

Why they ask

This tests commercial judgement and whether you can give honest advice rather than defaulting to the bigger sale.

How to structure your answer

Use a decision framework: condition of the part, cost of the repair, safety, and the rider's use of the bike.

Example answer

“I look at the condition of the part and whether the repair will actually last. If a wheel is slightly out of true, truing it is the right call. If the rim is cracked or the hub is shot, I will say so and explain that a new wheel is the safer option. I also ask how they use the bike. Someone commuting every day needs reliability, while a casual rider might be fine with a repair that gets them through the season. I give them the repair cost and the replacement cost side by side, without pushing, and let them decide. If it is a safety issue, I make that clear and will not release the bike until it is sorted.”

5. Describe how you true a wheel and check spoke tension.

Why they ask

Wheel work is a hands-on skill and the interviewer may follow this up with a bench test.

How to structure your answer

Use a technical walk-through: setup, measurement, adjustment, and final check.

Example answer

“I put the wheel in the truing stand and spin it to find the worst lateral wobble first. I use the feeler arm to set a reference point, then work on the high spots by tightening the spokes on the opposite side and loosening the ones on the same side, a quarter turn at a time. I check radial runout as well, not just side to side. For tension, I squeeze pairs of spokes and use a tension meter on a few key ones, aiming for even tension rather than just a straight rim. Once it is true, I stress the wheel by pressing

down on the axle, then check it again, because spokes can settle. I finish with a final spin and a check that no spoke is loose."

6. Tell me about a time you found a safety issue on a bike that the customer had not noticed.

Why they ask

This shows whether you work to a safety standard and whether you speak up, which matters in a workshop that returns bikes to riders.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR, with a clear focus on what you found, how you raised it, and what happened next.

Example answer

"A rider booked in for a basic service and mentioned the brakes felt a bit soft. When I checked the bike, the front brake pads were worn past the wear line and a cable was frayed near the lever. The rider had not noticed because they mostly rode on the flat. I stopped the service and rang them before doing anything else, explained what I had found and why I would not let the bike leave with the cable in that condition, and gave them the cost of the fix. They approved it, and I replaced the cable and pads and tested the brakes before the bike went out. I would rather have that conversation than send someone onto the road on a bike that could fail."