

tried & tested

By Ed Sorbo

ProAligner

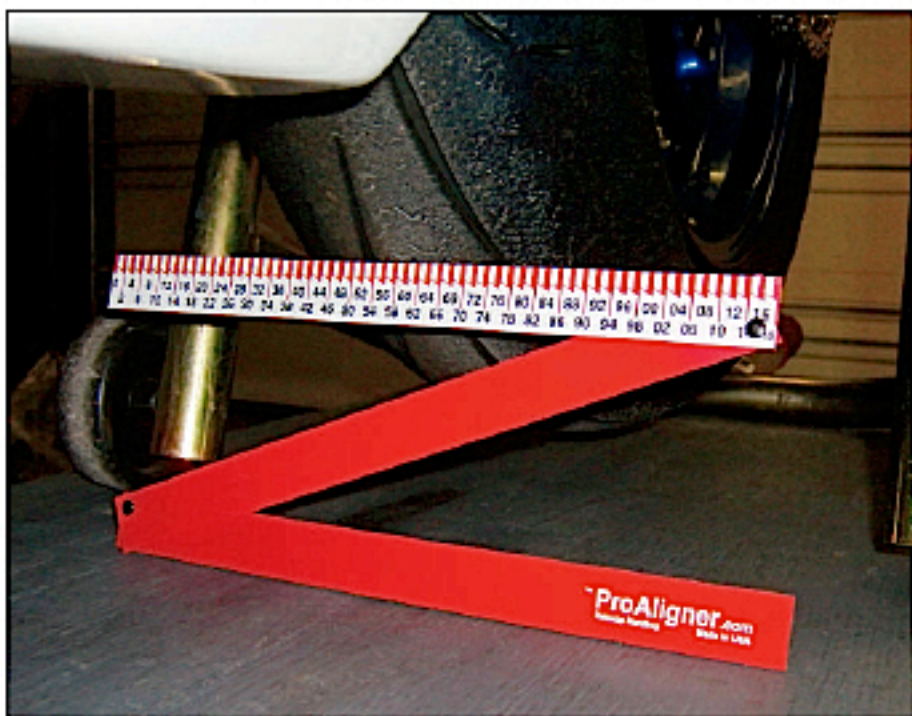
The issue at hand is how to best check the alignment of your bike's wheels. It's easy to imagine your front and rear tires rolling along on a straight line drawn down the length of your bike. If the



center of the contact patches are aligned, everything is going in the same direction and all is well.

Now imagine—or maybe you don't have to imagine—that the front of your rear tire is pointing off, say, to the right. Now the back of your bike is trying to go somewhere the front doesn't want it to go. This conflict costs you speed and puts unwanted heat into your tires.

The new ProAligner tool is supposed to help you check your wheel alignment and I gave it a try. I started by reading the printed instructions and everything on the company's website www.proaligner.com which is where you go to pur-



(Left) The ProAligner and the plastic sleeve it comes in. (Above) The ProAligner in position, resting against the leading edge of the rear wheel. (Bottom) A bike on a shop work table with the ProAligner in position and the instructions and a notepad in place near the front wheel. After sighting along the front and rear edges on each side of the front tire and comparing the readings on the ProAligner scale, a mechanic can calculate which way to move the chain adjusters to line up the wheels.

chase a ProAligner for \$29.95 plus shipping and handling. The instructions are also printed on the back of the protective sleeve the tool comes in, but watch out because a few words were left out of steps Six and 12. I worked from a print-out of the website instructions.

The ProAligner is a scale that you place against a wheel. By sighting along the edges of the tires you use this scale to calculate which way and how far you need to move your chain adjusters to get the wheels aligned.

After reading everything and looking at all the pictures and diagrams I put a test Suzuki GSX-R600 on my work table so I would-

n't have to lay on the floor. (Incidentally, work tables and lift stands rock.) Step One is to center the front wheel so it's pointed straight ahead. Step Two is to align the rear wheel. My first try missed. On my second try I got it. I liked the smaller of the two scale sizes better and I made sure I looked at the scale from the same point in space each time, just like the instructions indicate. You will need a note pad to record the numbers from the scale and you will also need the ability to do simple math or use a calculator. Note: Where the instructions say "B-A," read that as "B minus A" not "B, A."

After my practice run I adjusted the bike's alignment using the ProAligner in about 10 minutes. This system works much better than the string method. This system does not tell you if your frame is straight. It just helps you easily line up two of the most important points on your bike.

When I was done I sent an e-mail to ProAligner.com's info address and called their phone number like I had a question. Both worked and I got responses from each with the e-mail being a little faster than the phone.

As to the question of how well I like this tool—I can say that it will not be going back. It now lives in my toolbox. **RW**

