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How to do a compression test.

Technically, you should do this when the engine is hot. I don't like burning my fingers, so do it when the engine is cold. This will tell you what you need to know. Before removing the spark plugs, it's a good idea to loosen and blow around them

with compressed air to remove dirt that might fall into the engine. Screw the compression gauge into the spark plug hole, hold the throttle wide open, and operate the kick starter fifteen times. Note the gauge reading and release the pressure. Run the test on the other cylinder. Both cylinders should be within 10% of each other. If you have low compression i.e. below 100psi or 7 bar, a 'wet' test is helpful to narrow down the cause. Squirt two teaspoon's worth of oil into the cylinder through the spark plug hole and wait 10 minutes for it to flow over the piston crown and on to the top ring. Complete the test again. The oil will hold compression for a while. If your retest with oil gives significantly higher compression, the rings are worn. If there's little change in compression, it's the valves or cylinder head joint that's leaking. If you think it's the valves, it's worth checking the valve tappet clearances. If the gaps are tight, they could cause a compression leak. If the gap are tight, reset them to the proper clearances and test again.

