

Auto Repair Guide

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How to Extend the Life of Your Tires

How to Extend the Life of Your Car Tires

All drivers know the costly expenses associated with replacing a vehicle's tires. While no tire will last forever, it is possible to extend the life of a tire with a few simple steps. By adhering to a regular tire maintenance routine, you can save money and keep you, your passengers and other drivers safe on the roads.

Steps

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1 **Check your tire pressure weekly.** Unscrew the cap on your tire's air intake and hold a tire pressure gauge against it, allowing air to flow out of the tire and into the gauge. All tires on your vehicle should be evenly inflated.

- If you don't know the proper tire pressure for your vehicle, consult with the vehicle owner's manual.
- Additionally, all tires imprint recommended tire pressure directly onto the tire. The recommended pressure of the car manufacturer and the tire manufacturer may vary slightly, as promoting a lower pressure improves drive performance, while a higher pressure extends the life of the tire.
- However, avoid over-inflating your tires, as this may cause extensive tread wear in the center of the tire.



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2 Visually examine tires for cuts and holes. Roads are full of debris, some of which is sharp such as glass and nails. A nail in a tire may not cause an immediate flat tire, but could result in a slow leak of tire pressure or a future flat tire.

- To avoid changing a tire roadside, repair any small cuts and holes you find on your tires, and replace tires with large holes or abrasions in them.



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3 Rotate your tires every 6,000 miles (9,700 km) driven. You may find it most convenient to rotate your tires every other time you get an oil change. You can rotate your tires yourself or visit a mechanic to do the job.

- If you choose to rotate your own tires, use a reliable car jack to avoid injuries, and trade wheels between axles, keeping them on the same side of the car.
- Avoid switching tires on the same axle, or moving them in a criss-cross pattern. Keeping your tires rotated will promote even tread wear.



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- 4** **Keep your tires properly aligned.** Unless you are a licensed or experienced mechanic, tire alignment is best left to the professionals.
- Every vehicle is different, as are tires. A mechanic uses special equipment to balance and align tires, ensuring that your tires remain perpendicular to the ground and parallel to each other.
 - Signs of distorted wheel alignment include poor vehicle handling, consistent pulling of the vehicle to the right or left or crookedness of the steering wheel. Also, check your wheel alignment if you hit a major pothole or curb at a high rate of speed.

Tips

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- Purchase a portable air compressor to keep tires properly inflated at all times. Not only does proper air pressure maintain the integrity of the tires, but it also results in overall better fuel efficiency.

Warnings

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- Check your tires' walls regularly for wear indicators. All tires have wear indicators spaced throughout the tread, with more located where the tread meets the tire wall. If the wear indicator is higher than the tread, replace your tires to avoid a flat or a tire blowout.

Things You'll Need

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- Tire pressure gauge
- Air compressor
- Car jack (optional)

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