

Tire Care

Your tires are the only point of contact that your vehicle has with the road – they need to be in good working condition at all times to ensure your safety. To avoid any problems, follow these important care tips:

Tools required: Tire pressure gauge, air inflator, tread depth gauge, good source of light

Shopping tips: When shopping for a tire inflator, consider cost versus power.

Low-cost: There are a lot of low investment top-up inflators on the market

Pros: They are generally good for topping up your tire during a small low pressure situation and can get you to the nearest service station if you continue to lose pressure. They are easy to store in the passenger cabin under the seat.

Cons: They have minimal features which can keep you juggling between the inflator and the tire gauge to fill your tire to the correct amount. They over heat easily and may shut off when they get too hot and require a rest period after only a few minutes of use. They are generally slow to fill a tire which in the cold and the dark can be uncomfortable. They can be loud, it takes a long time to top up air in more than one tire, high vibration/light-weight so they tend to move around during operation and wear out and require replacing more frequently.

Mid-high range Cost: A little more investment in your inflator will last a little longer

Pros: They can fill a tire with air fairly quickly, often come with useful features such as:

- Auto shut-off – great for preventing over/under inflation
- Programmable pressure limit – to help you not have to constantly monitor progress
- Built in pressure gauge – so you don't have to alternate between inflator and gauge
- 12-volt / 120-volt power supply so you don't necessarily have to run your car while you fill pressure (great in small spaces with little ventilation)
- Larger motor – which means a faster fill rate and less down time, you can top up all your tires without giving the motor a rest to cool down

- **Inspect your tires:** You may not always notice if one of your tires has been damaged. Inspect your tires regularly for wear and any damage to avoid any sudden problems. Make sure you have a good source of light or perform this task in a well-lit area. Also, have a professional inspect and rotate your tires every year or every time you change your seasonal tires. There are tread depth testers in the market that make it easy for you to learn how to do this and make it a part of routine inspections you perform on your own.
- **Check the air pressure:** Driving with incorrect tire pressures can affect a vehicle's handling and braking, particularly in wet conditions, and can seriously compromise your safety. Always check

your pressure when your car has been sitting and your tires are cool. Winter and summer conditions can change your pressure readings. Check your tire pressure monthly and before every long trip. Pay attention to the warning lights, you'll often not notice a loss in air pressure from a slow leak or damage from wear and tear or imbedded foreign object, the warning light could be your first sign of trouble. Get a reliable and accurate tire gauge and keep it within easy reach to help perform this task easily and regularly. When driving if you notice your vehicle pulling to one side it's a good idea to pull over when safely possible and check your tires as it's often an indication of uneven inflation, which can be from loss of pressure in one or more tires. (see sections on using tire gauge and inflator)

- **Respect the load capacity:** Do not exceed the load capacity relative to the tire's load index. Tires loaded beyond their maximum loads can build up excessive heat that may result in sudden tire destruction.
- **Speed Limits, Warning Signs and Over/Under Inflation:** By keeping an eye on your tire pressure you also help prevent over or under inflation both of which can contribute to dangerous conditions. Driving at high speeds in with an over inflated tire can damage your tire, create uneven wear and a bumpier ride. At greater speeds, tires have a greater chance of being damaged by road hazards or heat build-up. With an under or over inflated tire exceeding posted speed limits and ignoring warning signs can also contribute to a rapid air loss or even a sudden tire explosion, which can cause the loss of control of the vehicle. Keeping your tires inflated to the correct amount also results in a smoother ride, better traction, even wear on your tires and optimal fuel consumption; your car works harder to make up for an under/over inflated tire.
- **Use your spare tire:** If you see any damage to a tire or wheel, replace it with your spare tire and have your tire checked by a professional. Remember when you inspect your tires to also inspect your spare for wear. Keep your spare tire inflated to the correct pressure so it's ready to go when/if you need it. It will also help you get on the road quicker and could reduce the time you spend stranded in unsafe conditions.
- **Tire Storage:** If you own two sets of tires, ensure they stay in great condition by storing them properly and safely. Proper storage protects their appearance and performance.
 - **Store tires indoors:** A Garage or storage shed will protect your tires from direct sunlight or extreme heat. If you don't have an indoor location to store your tires make sure the tires are not stored directly on the ground and cover them with a ventilated waterproof covering, you don't want moisture or condensation building up on your tires.
 - **Clean your tires:** Before storage wipe down tires and rims from grease, gas or grime.
 - **Inflate:** Make sure your tires are stored with proper pressure maintained you can double check the proper pressure by consulting your owner's manual or sticker on the driver's door frame.
 - **Upright vs Stacked:** If your tires have decorative elements it's best to store them upright and either covered individually or with a separator between them, whitewalls or raised lettering can become damaged or scuffed if they rub on other surfaces. If you need to store them stacked use tire storage bags and face the decorative elements in towards each other.

Pro-Tip

If you live in a four-season climate with snowy cold winters make sure to have 2 sets of tires, one for cold and/or snowy, winter driving and one for dry warm conditions. Store your spare set of tires in tire bags to keep them clean and free of dirt and grime and if you have room for a tire rack it's a great way to get the tires off the floor, save space and treat your tires with care during their off season. Following these tips will make your tires last longer and improve your drive in all conditions.

Remember, use common sense and your full attention when you are driving. No matter how prepared you are for an emergency, no matter how many safety tools or precautions you take, sometimes choosing not to drive in poor conditions is the smartest, safest choice.

All the tips and instructions in this resource are meant to keep you safe as possible when you find yourself in an unexpected situation but nothing is foolproof or perfect. Be prepared, stay informed and make smart choices.

