

Tyres

Why are tyres important?

Often neglected, tyres play an important role in your safety. Tyres are responsible for creating the critically important contact between your car and the road. Every driving decision you make, be it to accelerate, brake or steer, will depend on how well your tyres grip the road. Tyres are always working. Even when you're stationary, the tyres must carry the full weight of the vehicle and any load it might be carrying.

Common mistakes

The two biggest problems most drivers will face are under-inflated tyres and insufficient tread depth.

Under-inflated tyres don't grip as well as correctly inflated tyres, particularly around corners or in bends. Under-inflated tyres tend to distort, or change shape, usually resulting in poor grip and uneven wear. Under-inflated tyres tend to use more fuel and wear out sooner than properly inflated tyres.

Over-inflated tyres are also a problem, as tyres with too much air tend to bounce on rough roads. Bouncing tyres lose grip as they skip across the road surface.

All road tyres have tread. Tread is the grooved pattern that can be seen on the outermost edge of the tyre where it touches the road. Tread is important for moving water away from between the road and tyre, and helps the tyre grip on slippery surfaces like gravel. The tread depth may vary from tyre to tyre, but in most states you must have a minimum tread depth of around 1.5 mm. It's safer to change your tyres earlier than this; 3 mm is a good time to change tyres.

Tyre Placards

Important information about the correct tyre size & pressure can be found on your car's tyre placard. The tyre placard is most often found in the driver's door cavity, behind the petrol flap, or in the glove box. If you can't find the tyre placard, look in the owner's manual or ask the vehicle manufacturer.

How often should I check the tyres?

Tyres normally lose air very slowly. You should check tyre pressure and tread wear weekly. It's best to wait until your tyres have cooled down from a trip. Consider purchasing a tyre pressure gauge so you can check your tyres when they are cold at home. Finally, it's very important to make sure you have valve caps fitted. Valve caps are designed to keep the air in your tyre, once you've checked and adjusted them to the correct pressure.

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