



TYRES WORTH OWNING

TYRE CHECK TIPS:

TYRE PRESSURES

Checking your tyre pressures is easily one of the most important things you need to do before a trip. Failure to maintain correct pressures may result in uneven wear, improper vehicle handling, and excessive heat build-up which could result in tyre failure.

Over-inflation: If your tyres are over-inflated they could be damaged more easily when driving over potholes or debris on the road. Over inflation also causes tyres to wear in the centre of the tyre's tread which will reduce the tread life. Over-inflated tyres will also give you a much harsher ride.

Under-inflation: If your vehicle's tyres are under-inflated, it could lead to tyre damage from overheating. Additionally, the tyre's tread life could be reduced significantly with tyres wearing more on the outside shoulders. Lower inflation pressure allows the tyre to flex more as it rolls causing internal heat.

What to do: You should check your tyres' pressures before your getaway, and each morning you drive during a trip. Ideally, tyre pressure should be measured when tyres are cold - before doing any driving on the tyres. Otherwise, your tyres may have heated up, increasing the air pressure inside them by several pounds per square inch (PSI). This is normal and as a rule never reduce the air pressure from a hot tyre, since this could result in under-inflation once the tyre cools down. Only reduce air pressure from a hot tyre when you need to lower pressures to drive on a particular terrain, but remember to re-inflate your tyres when you reach your destination, or return to terrain that requires higher pressures.

CHECK YOUR TREAD DEPTH

More tread means more mileage. More tread also gives you shorter braking distances, which is essential for sudden conditions changes, or wet conditions. Although 1.6mm of tread depth is the legal limit in Australia, tread depths below 3mm take considerably longer distances to brake, putting your safety at risk.

CHECK YOUR WHEEL ALIGNMENT AND BALANCE

The regular care and maintenance of wheel alignment and balancing are crucial to the performance and wear of your tyres. Failing to align and balance your tyres will give you an uncomfortable and unstable drive. You don't really want that for a long drive or even putting your safety at risk when you need your tyres to stay stable and true on the road.

CHECK YOUR SPARE TYRE

Before you head off, inspect your spare tyre to make sure it is free from cuts, nails and any evident damage. Also, make sure it has a safe tread level left and it's properly inflated to the conditions you are planning to drive on.

AVOID OVERLOADING

The excitement of a trip in the horizon can easily lead to overloading your vehicle. Driving on an overloaded tyre is hazardous. When your car is carrying too much load, the weight can create excessive heat inside your tyres – with the potential to cause sudden tyre failure. Never exceed the maximum load rating of your tyres, which you can find on the sidewall of the tyre. When you replace a tyre, make sure the new one has a load-carrying capacity equal to or greater than what is specified on your vehicle's placard. To avoid this, check what your load-carrying capacity is and plan accordingly. Learn what the Load Index and Speed Ratings mean.

CHECK YOUR TYRE WEAR

Run your hand over your tyres. Do they feel smooth and even? Or more like a saw blade or lumpy? When your tyres are nice and even you can feel confident that your wheel alignment is within spec and you are going to have nice even driving ahead of you. If there is uneven wear, it can mean a number of things. As little as your wheel alignment being out through to your suspension being worn out or not working properly. If this is the case, you should take you 4WD to your tyre shop or suspension specialist before you leave for a quick once over.

CHECK FOR ROCKS

By removing small rocks that may be stuck in your tread blocks – you are decreasing the likelihood of a puncture down the track. Rocks that are stuck in your tread will wear down with your tyres or cause separation by drilling into the tyres' case and then into the steel belts. This will cause a puncture and if the rock is of a reasonable size may cause the puncture to be non-repairable – then you are up for a completely new tyre not just the small price to fix a puncture.

CHECK FOR CUTS AND CHIPS IN THE TREAD

By looking at the current state of your tyres, you can see if there is any pre-existing damage to them. This will give you an indication of your last trip off-road. If there are some chips out of the tread or in extreme cases chunks of tread missing altogether, you may have been running too high pressures or going too fast along the track. By slowing down or running a lower pressure this will prevent that from happening.