

Terms and Definitions

Wheel – The entire component set including rim, tube, tire, spokes, valve stem, hub, etc.

Tire – The thick rubber outer part of the wheel.

Tube – The thin rubber inner part (not visible).

Valve Stem – The part that sticks out of the rim, used to inflate the tube. Note there are two types of valves: presta (tall and skinny) and schrader (short and fat). If presta, unscrew top of stem in order to deflate/inflate.

What You'll Need

1. Spare tube.
2. A way to air up the tube (hand pump and/or CO2 cartridges and inflation adapter).
3. Tire levers (nice to have – not required).
4. Patch kit (nice to have – not required).



Changing a Flat Tire in 20 Easy Steps

1. Tire is flat.
2. Loosen brake – if necessary.
3. If a rear wheel flat, pay attention to how the chain looks because you'll have to put the wheel back on the same way. Shift your gears to smallest cog on the rear cassette for ease in removing wheel. It may also be easier to flip your bike upside down and set on seat and handle bars to change the tire.
4. Open/loosen break calipers.
5. Unscrew the tire skewer or nut and remove the wheel.
6. Ensure all the air is out of the tube.
7. Remove one side or edge of the tire – use tire levers!!
8. Remove tube – completely.
Note: If there is a nut around the tube valve stem, you will need to unscrew it to remove the tube.
9. Inspect the tire for puncture or tear. Visually inspect and carefully run your fingers along the inside of the tire to find anything sharp or sticking in the tire. Remove any debris.
➡ TIP: If you have a gash or tear in your tire, you can use a dollar bill or wrapper to line the inside of the tire and protect the tube from future punctures. Replace tire if necessary.
10. Get new tube out.
11. Put tube in tire, starting by inserting the stem first. Make sure there are no twists or pinched areas.
➡ TIP: Blow up the tube with your mouth to unkink tube.
12. Put tire back on rim. Use tire levers or your hands if you can.
➡ CAUTION: Watch that you don't pinch the tube as it's easy to get it caught between the rim and tire.
13. Inflate the tube a little bit just to get the tube seated into the tire and the tire seated onto the rim.
14. Deflate the tube.
15. Re-inflate to full PSI (pounds per square inch) – PSI rating is usually stamped on the side of the tire.
 - Hand pump: you may not be able to pump up the tire to full PSI but it will be enough to get you home.
 - CO2 air cartridge: you will be able to fill up the tire to full PSI. Note that CO2 cartridge air is only good for about 8 hours and by the next day, your tire will be low or flat. Just re-air with a tire pump.
16. Put wheel back on bike. If rear wheel, make sure chain is correct
17. Tighten skewer or nut holding wheel in place.
18. Close/tighten brake caliper.
19. Spin wheel and test brake.
20. Done!

Final Thoughts

1. When (not if) a flat happens, don't panic.
2. Always have an action plan and carry what you need to fix a flat.
3. Practice changing a flat until you can do it on your own.



Materials by Susan Farago, coach for Austin-based Texas Iron Multisport (www.texasiron.net). Susan can be reached at: susan@redlicoriceevents.com. 2009.