

How do I select the right replacement tires for my motorcycle?

The only sure way of doing this is to refer to the approved recommendations of a tire manufacturer or your motorcycle owner's manual.

All reputable tire manufacturers have their own list of approved tires for most motorcycle models. These lists may appear on websites, or in a booklet, and should be available at your motorcycle dealer or parts and accessory shop. The owner's manual will include the original sizes and type of tire. In some cases, an alternative will also be included. Always make sure that the tires recommended for your bike appear in a written form. In other words, don't follow someone's personal recommendation. It is very important, and one rider's preference does not necessarily suit another's. Take the advice of the professionals: the motorcycle or tire manufacturer.

At what age is a tire no longer usable?

Service life is dependent on many variables such as inflation pressure, storage, driving conditions, loads, general maintenance and abuse. Scientific or technical data indicate that a specific minimum or maximum service life cannot be objectively established. It is not appropriate to establish an arbitrary tire removal date based on chronological age due to the wide variety of factors affecting a tire's service life.

Why are some front and rear patterns reversed? What about channeling the water?

Many Dunlop motorcycle tire patterns have "reversed front patterns" compared to rear, because different forces act on front and rear tires. We test all Dunlop tires for satisfactory wet performance in the direction as indicated on the sidewall. It is important to always mount the tire in the correct direction of rotation as indicated by the arrow on the sidewall.

How can I keep my tires from cupping?

You may not be able to entirely avoid cupping. Tire cupping or irregular wear is a somewhat common occurrence on all vehicles. On a four-wheel vehicle, you are advised to rotate your tires periodically to even out wear. Unfortunately, you do not have this luxury with a motorcycle because front and rear tires, unlike those on most four-wheel vehicles, are not interchangeable.

However, there are steps that can be taken to minimize cupping and uneven wear on a motorcycle: Maintain your motorcycle and particularly your front and suspension. Avoid hard braking whenever possible. Braking causes the tire to grab and wear in one direction. When braking is applied to the front tire, the load transfer over-flexes the tire and increases the tendency for cupping and uneven wear. Maintain your tire pressures. Under inflation and overloading of motorcycle tires are

significant causes of cupping and uneven wear, particularly in association with hard braking and/or trailer use.

Once a tire begins to show signs of uneven wear, even following these steps may not improve the condition.

Tire companies can, and are, helping to minimize cupping and uneven wear but you, the rider, must do your part. Following the aforementioned guidelines will help avoid uneven wear.

How much run-in should I give a new tire?

When new tires are fitted, they should not be subjected to maximum power or hard cornering until a reasonable run-in distance of approximately 100 miles has been achieved.

This is necessary for a number of reasons. Replacements for worn tires with different patterns and construction will not react the same. Also, a new tire is stiffer than an old tire. The new tire has a rounder tread profile, different contact patch and “lean-over edge” than the worn profile of an old tire. The new tire will also not react the same in combination with its remaining tire.

Carrying out the required run-in will allow you to become accustomed to the “feel” of the new tires and tire combinations, so you are better able to achieve optimum road grip for use in high speed, high acceleration and handling situations.

Should I use nitrogen in my tires?

Nitrogen is not widely available and provides the same rolling resistance as tires filled with air. Scientific tests on the effect of the use of nitrogen in tires and changes in tire physical properties are inconclusive. In testing, nitrogen tires lost 2/3 as much as air-filled tires, so the benefits are minimal. If you want to maintain the nitrogen, any refills will need to be with nitrogen, not air. That means maintaining your tires becomes less convenient and more costly. The most important tire maintenance function is ensuring correct tire inflation pressure, which is easier using air than nitrogen.

Can I change my tires from bias ply to radial or vice versa?

Bias and radial tires have significantly different dynamic properties. They deflect differently, create different cornering forces, have different damping characteristics, as well as other differences. In order for radial tires to be introduced into the two-wheel market, it was necessary to change certain characteristics of the motorcycle. The introduction of the radial tire led to such things as modified frames, wider wheels, new steering geometries and suspensions. Therefore, it is recommended that a motorcycle be used with the type of tire construction that it came with originally. If a change is to be made, then it should only be done if the motorcycle or tire manufacturer has approved the change. Above all, do not mix bias ply and radial tires on the same motorcycle unless it is with the approval of the motorcycle or tire manufacturer.

Can I put wider tires on my motorcycle?

This is possible in some cases, but again, it should only be done with the approval of the motorcycle or tire manufacturer. When considering wider tires, you must factor in clearance for width and diameter, the effect on stability and handling, along with whether your rim is wide enough. If wider tires are approved for a motorcycle, it is usually permissible to increase by only one size designation. When fitting a larger tire, always allow for some tire growth from the new to used situation. All tires increase in size after they have been inflated and are run for a few hundred miles. In some cases, putting a wider tire onto the same wheel will actually give you less “rubber on the road”, by changing the profile and reducing the contact patch.

Can I use a car tire on the back of my motorcycle?

No. The design of automotive tires and motorcycle tires are very different. The profile of automotive and motorcycle rims are different with a different bead seating area. An automotive tire will not seat properly on a motorcycle rim, making it more susceptible to problems such as rim slip, which can cause balance problems.

Motorcycles are designed specifically with a unique tread profile for leaning over when cornering. Under emergency or extreme maneuvering conditions, an automotive tire on a motorcycle may not allow the bike to handle as it was intended, which can lead to accident, injury or death.

Can I put a rear tire on the front or vice-versa?

Motorcycle tires are designed to work together in front or rear applications due to loading, steering and braking forces. Unless specially designed, you can only use a front on the front and a rear on the rear, following the directional rotation arrows.

How often should you change the valve stem or tube?

Every time you change your tires you should use a new, properly installed valve stem for a tubeless tire or change the tube for a tube type application.

I participate in Track Days. What inflation pressure should I use?

This varies on the model of tire, track conditions and temperature. If tire pressures are adjusted for track use, always remember to reset the inflation pressure back to the recommended street inflation pressure before you leave the track.

Why do motorcycle tires wear out so quickly compared to car tires?

In answering this question, we must first make sure that we are comparing apples to apples. When you think of it, the vast majority of motorcycles are high performance vehicles compared to most cars. Consider that you rarely see a motorcycle with less than "H" speed-rated tire. By comparison, the vast majority of cars ride on tires with lower speed ratings. Power-to-weight ratio and speed are big factors with respect to tire wear. Unfortunately, when many people compare mileage, they do so with a family sedan and a much higher-performance motorcycle.

Another significant factor in this comparison is the size of the tire contact footprint. In the case of a car, the footprint is much larger and there are four, not two tires contacting the pavement. You must keep in mind that virtually the entire width of the relatively flat tread of a car is in contact with the road all of the time. A car remains upright, even when cornering. This results in a much smaller contact footprint for a motorcycle tire. High power-to-weight ratio, speed, size of footprint and other aspects explain why motorcycle tires wear out quicker than car tires.

To obtain the best mileage from your motorcycle tires, observe the following guidelines: obey the speed limit; avoid quick acceleration and hard braking; maintain recommended tire pressures; and do not overload your bike or tow a trailer.

What is the best way to clean and protect my tires?

Use a mild soap solution to clean your sidewalls, white striping or lettering, and rinse off with plain water. Never use protectants, cleaners or dressings to enhance your tire appearance. These may degrade the rubber and remove the inherent ozone cracking/weather checking resistance.

What inflation pressure should I use?

Maintain tire inflation and load in accordance with your motorcycle owner's manual, tire information placard and restrictions molded into the tire sidewall. The pressure noted on the sidewall of the tire is a maximum for that tire and may not match the recommended pressure for your motorcycle. So always follow the tire manufacturer's or motorcycle manufacturer's inflation pressure recommendation.

All pressures should be set cold—that is, before the bike is ridden.

Is it normal for my tires to build up additional pressure?

Yes. Under most riding conditions, the pressure will increase due to heat build-up from the tire and from environmental conditions. This is normal, and the pressure should not be adjusted while the tire is hot.

Should I let air out of my tires when they get hot to keep the recommended pressure?

No. Air expands as it gets warmer and will raise the tire air pressure. Do not adjust the pressure down while the tire is hot or has been ridden recently.

How often should I check my tires?

Checking tires regularly is the most important maintenance function you can perform. At least once a week, and daily when on a trip, check and maintain the correct inflation pressure and visually inspect the tire all the way around for any signs of damage.

What type of air gauge is best?

A good quality gauge that holds its reading, is easy to use and you will use often. Gauges do wear out and should be checked annually to ensure accuracy.

Is the D404 an acceptable replacement tire for use on Harley Davidson models?

The D404 is not meant to be used on Harley Davidson motorcycles. In many cases the D404 does not have the load carrying capacity for use on Harley Davidson motorcycles. Most D404 tires are intended for lighter, cruising motorcycles and are constructed for use on those bikes. D404 tires are bias tires, not bias belted, and do not have additional supporting plies.

Motorcycle tires differ from each other in their size, their load carrying capacity, internal construction and the intended type of use. For example, tires for sport riding compared to tires for long distance touring may have different compounds, constructions and tread patterns.

Always fit the correct tires to your motorcycle, and for Harley Davidson motorcycles, never fit a D404.

How can I get sponsored?

Off-Road Sponsorship (All Amateurs – youth/adult) Submit request for consideration through for the appropriate discipline. Canadian residents can now also apply.

Why are some dealers selling the same tires cheaper than others— are they seconds?

No. Dunlop does not sell seconds or blemished tires. Dealers are free to set their own pricing.

What is the recommended tread depth to replace tires?

Always remove the tires from service before they reach the treadwear indicator bars (1/32 of an inch tread pattern depth remaining). Worn/unworn tire combinations and worn tires used in wet conditions can result in deteriorated handling and can lead to accident, injury or death.

Can I mix MX tread patterns on my bike?

Yes! Use the different models of tire for different off-road conditions and riding preferences.