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Signs Rotors May Need To Be Replaced For Smooth Braking

The braking system of most vehicles consists of brake pads, calipers and metal discs called rotors that work to slow down a vehicle. When the vehicle needs to stop, the calipers squeeze the brake pads against the spinning rotors.



Because a lot of friction is generated, rotors, like brake pads, need to be replaced periodically. However, drivers may not know when these components need to be changed or if other services can be done to prolong the life of the rotors a little longer.

The first step is to inspect the braking system. A healthy brake rotor will be smooth and have an uninterrupted surface that is free of dust, grooves and grit, advises automotive retailer CarsDirect. If brake pads have caused grooves to form, the pads or the rotors may need to be replaced.

Another tactic is to listen for brake noise when driving. Mechanics state that noise is commonly associated with bad

brake rotors. If the rotors produce squealing or squeaking noises or even scraping noises while braking, they may need to be replaced.

Warped rotors also may produce vibrations that can be felt when the brakes are applied. A pulsing or rough feeling can vibrate through the entire chassis, says YourMechanic, a vehicle repair and advice website. Speak with a qualified mechanic to see if a lathe can be used to shave off a little of the rotors and get a few more miles out of them. Otherwise, to ensure safe, adequate braking, rotors will need to be replaced anywhere from 30,000 to 70,000 miles depending on the type of brake pads and motorists' driving style.

Signs Transmission Fluid Is Low

Vehicles require all sorts of maintenance to operate safely and efficiently. Contrary to popular belief, motorists need not be amateur mechanics to keep their vehicles running strong. Major vehicle repairs are best left to the professionals, but drivers can learn to identify the causes of relatively minor issues that, if left untreated, can cause significant damage. For example, vehicles may exhibit certain signs of that indicate their transmission fluid needs replenishing. In many of the fol-

lowing instances, drivers may only need to top off the transmission fluid in their vehicles. However, if issues persist, schedule an appointment with a mechanic.

- Overheated transmission: Smoke billowing from a car is a sight no driver wants to see. But as bad as it may look, smoke coming from a car may only indicate the transmission is overheating due to lack of fluid. Smoke also can be indicative of a host of other problems, so if transmission fluid levels are not

low, consult a mechanic. Loss of power and a burning smell also may indicate low transmission fluid levels.

- Erratic shifting: Drivers can notice how their vehicles shift whether the cars or trucks have automatic or manual transmissions. Transmission fluid may be low if shifts appear to be delayed or faster than normal or if the vehicle appears to be slamming into a new gear. The automotive service provider Aamco notes that shifting issues related to transmission fluid may indicate the presence of a leak. If the issue disappears after refilling transmission fluid but then reappears shortly

thereafter, consult a mechanic.

- Pausing when engaging gears: A two- to three-second pause when shifting into drive and reverse is another indicator that transmission fluid levels are low. The automotive experts at Firestone note that manual transmissions require fluid to keep gears lubricated, while automatic transmissions rely on fluid to create the hydraulic pressure necessary to power movement within the

transmission. When fluid levels are low, shifting from park to drive or reverse can take longer than it should.

- Slipping transmission: Vehicles that are not staying in gear also may be in need of transmission fluid. However, a slipping transmission also may indicate significant damage to

the transmission has already occurred, so this issue should be brought to the attention of a mechanic.

Low transmission fluid levels can contribute to various symptoms. Keeping an eye on fluid levels and recognizing low fluid symptoms can keep cars running smoothly.

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Why Is Tire Rotation Important?

Vehicle owners need to keep maintenance on the mind to ensure their cars and trucks are operating at peak capacity. Various components should be checked and serviced at key intervals. Oil changes and fluid top-offs are part of routine maintenance, but it can be easy to forget about other important parts of the vehicle, including tires.

Rotating tires is vital to their upkeep. Bridgestone Tires advises that tire rotation involves routinely repositioning a vehicle's tires in specific patterns from front to back and side to side. According to Big O Tires, the front tires tend to wear on the outside edges because the tire leans over when a driver turns a corner. The rear tires just follow the front ones, so they usually wear more evenly. By leaving tires in place, the outside edges on the front tires will wear down much faster than the rest and those tires will need to be replaced sooner. Rotation may be required by tire warranties. Rotation also keeps the tires working properly.

Experts generally advise tire rotation every 6,000 to 8,000 miles, even if they do not show any signs of wear. It is challenging to determine if weather trends are uneven or how much wear has been sustained just by looking at them. Rotating tires can prolong the life of tires and decrease how frequently they need to be replaced.

Rotating tires keeps the tread depth uniform and helps maintain traction and consistent handling across all four tires. Bridgestone says the tire rotation pattern that is best for a particular vehicle depends on the type of tire being used. Patterns are recommended by the standardizing body of the tire industry, called The Tire and Rim Association, Inc. Individuals can consult with professional mechanics about the

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proper way to rotate tires. Many tire manufacturers or automotive stores that have sold customers tires also will do tire rotations, some free of charge.

In addition to proper traction, minimizing uneven tire treads causes the vehicle to be more balanced, advises Wrench, a mobile auto repair and maintenance company. This enables the driver to have more control even when roads are slippery. Many auto service centers will then align and balance tires after they have been rotated. At this time the mechanic will likely check brakes as well, since it is easy to see and reach them when the tires are off.

Tire rotation is an important component of vehicle maintenance. Check with a qualified automotive professional to see if it's time to have your vehicle's tires rotated.

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Waxing 101: What To Know Before Waxing Your Car

Waxing a car is a great way to maintain its exterior. Including waxing as part of your routine vehicle maintenance can protect the car or truck from some natural hazards, including sun damage, pollen and the dirt and grime that can accumulate on a car over time.

Motorists unfamiliar with waxing may be intimidated by the sheer volume of waxes on the shelves at their local automotive supply stores, which will no doubt offer an array of both liquid and paste waxes as well as many spray waxes. Consumer Reports found that liquid and paste waxes were relatively equal with regard to their effectiveness, while spray waxes were very convenient though not very durable.

Waxing a vehicle is no small task, and drivers should learn as much as they can about car wax and the different types of waxes before attempting the job themselves.

Always a good idea to question your long-time local auto parts store for their recommendations.

The differences between waxes. In their study of liquid, paste and spray waxes, Consumer Reports found that paste waxes were easier to apply than liquid waxes, but that the overall performance of paste waxes fell short of liquid waxes. Liquid waxes were very durable and provided the gloss many motorists look for when waxing their vehicles. But liquid waxes were difficult to apply evenly, something first timers should consider when choosing a wax. Spray waxes were convenient and easy to use, and many can be wiped off without drying. But Consumer Reports found spray waxes were not as durable as liquid or paste waxes, so they may need to be applied more frequently.

Because waxing is done to protect a car and improve its appearance, it's important that drivers waxing their vehicles for the first time test the wax on an area of their vehicles that is not easily seen to the naked eye. This affords some room for error as you learn the waxing ropes while also allowing you to test out different waxes until you find the right fit.

There are some additional tricks drivers can employ when waxing their vehicles that can make the job easier and the wax that much more effective.

- Wash first, then wax. Make sure you give your car or truck a good wash before you apply any wax. Allow the car to dry completely before applying any wax.
- Avoid sunlight. Consumer

Reports notes that sunlight can soften paint and make it susceptible to scratching, so avoid washing and waxing your car in direct sunlight.

- Use microfiber towels. Microfiber towels were found to be more effective than cloth rags at removing residue. In addition, cloth rags can trap dirt and scratch finishes, so opt for lamb's wool mitts instead.
- Go from top to bottom. The bottom of a vehicle is more susceptible to grime, so work your way down when waxing so you are not contaminating your towels. A contaminated towel increases the risk of scratching your vehicle's exterior.

When waxing your vehicle, the right wax and technique can make all the difference.

Automotive Word Find

Just in time for Car Care Month, find the hidden words in the puzzle.

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BELT	ENGINE	STEER
BRAKES	MECHANIC	TIRES
CAR	SAFETY	WASH

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