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Why Is Tire Rotation Is 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 treads 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 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.

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.

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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 that indicate their transmission fluid needs replenishing. In many of the following 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.

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pears 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

The Dangers Of Driving With Old Headlights

(MS) Routine vehicle maintenance protects drivers and their passengers and can keep cars and trucks running strong for years. Though drivers typically recognize the need to have their oil changed and their tires rotated, few may realize the importance of tending to their headlights as well.

Why replace aging headlights? Much like tires, shocks and brakes, headlight bulbs wear out over time. As bulbs age, they begin to dim, adversely affecting their light output.

"The filament in a headlight bulb ages with use, time and exposure to the elements," said Ann-Marie Hines, Senior Marketing Manager at Lumileds, a global lighting solutions company. "As a result, the bulb becomes fragile and starts to deteriorate, and this causes the light output to diminish. At the end of a typical service life, perhaps two to three years, headlight bulbs will likely be projecting a much shorter and less powerful beam light than when they were new."

Aging drivers are especially vulnerable to the ill effects of headlights with diminished light output. That's because the amount of light the human eye needs to see increases exponentially with age. As a person ages, his or her eyes naturally become more opaque, reducing the amount of light the

eyes can receive. That's a significant concern for aging drivers, but also for the people with whom they share the road, as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates there will be more than 57 million licensed drivers age 65 and older by 2030. Taking measures to have as much light as possible on the road when driving at night can go a long way toward ensuring the safety of all motorists.

How to put more light on the road While drivers may not be able to prevent the effects of aging on their eyes, they can take steps to put more light on the road when they're driving.

- **Replace old headlight bulbs.** Replacing old headlight bulbs is the simplest way for drivers to put more light on the road. Lumileds recommends replacing headlight bulbs in pairs every two to three years. Replacing bulbs in pairs, even if only one headlight appears to be dimming, can produce a more even light output that makes roads safer for drivers, their passengers and fellow motorists.
- **Upgrade headlight bulbs.** Merely replacing aging headlight bulbs might not be enough to adequately combat the effects of aging for many drivers. That's because a recent study from the AAA automotive club found that the halogen headlights used in

more than 80 percent of the vehicles on the road today failed to safely illuminate unlit roadways, even when vehicles were traveling at speeds as low as 40 miles per hour. Lumileds, the exclusive supplier of Philips automotive light products, offers a full range of Philips upgrade headlight bulbs that can help to dramatically improve nighttime vision and safety. These bulbs feature advanced technology that makes them brighter and more efficient, which puts more light on the road. Lumileds also has developed an innovative and convenient online Bulb Look Up that helps drivers identify the right headlight, exterior or interior bulb for their particular vehicles.

- **Keep headlights clean.** Dirty or clouded headlight lenses can also reduce light output and further compromise drivers' visibility at night. Periodically clean headlights to remove any build up of dirt or grime. If the lenses are clouded or have a yellow haze, the clarity can be restored to "like new" condition with the Philips Headlight Restoration Kit.

When combined with the natural effects of aging, old headlights can be dangerous. Thankfully, drivers can quickly and easily improve their vehicles' light output to make nighttime driving safer. Learn more at www.philipsautolighting.com

What To Do With A Cracked Windshield

The scenario is all too common. Drivers are traveling down the road, and a pebble gets kicked up and hits into their windshield, causing a small chip to appear. Slowly but surely that chip turns into a spreading, snaking crack that only gets worse with each bump and pothole. Having a broken windshield is not only unsightly and a big inconvenience, it can also be illegal. That's because the crack reduces the efficacy of the window safety composition, meaning it may shatter in the event of

an impact accident and cause extensive injuries. The crack also may impede a driver's ability to see the road clearly. It's important to note that liability car insurance typically doesn't cover a cracked windshield that occurs in a collision. Instead, drivers hoping to be covered need to have collision insurance on their vehicle. However, not all windshields crack in a car accident. Many are damaged in nonaccident related circumstances, whether this be a tree branch that falls on the car or a rock kicked up from the roadway. It's important to read an insurance policy thoroughly to be sure that nonaccident related cracks to the windshield will be covered. Even if the damage is covered, it may not be worth the expense of paying the insurance deductible and filing a claim, which may end up raising your rate in the long run. Many small nicks can be repaired easily with a kit purchased from an automotive supply

store. Inexpensive and user-friendly, the instructions guide users through the process of sealing the crack and preventing it from spreading. If the crack is beyond the scope of a do-it-yourself fix, a windshield repair service that specializes in this type of work might be necessary. These companies use products that harden quickly and reglaze the windshield so that the crack may not even be noticeable afterward. Upon inspection, a mechanic or a windshield replacement company may determine that the crack is not something that can be mended. The entire windshield will have to be replaced at this point. In some cases the windshield can be removed and replaced in the same day. While there is no way to prevent a cracked windshield entirely, there are certain ways to reduce the risk. This includes avoiding running over any debris on the road that can be kicked back at the windshield.

