



BICYCLE MAINTENANCE

FLATS AND PATCHES

Punctures

- Glass, thorns, nails, staples, screws; anything sharp can cause a flat
- These result in slow leaks that can take up to 48 hours to go completely flat
- Usually easily repaired with patch kit; not normally associated with severe tire damage

Pinch flats

- Compression of the tube between your rim and a hard surface
- Known as 'snakebites,' these are dramatic, audible flats that deflate quickly
- Hard to repair with patches; replace tube or use oval patches; rim damage possible

Tire damage

- Improperly adjusted brakes can rub through tire and cause tube to blow out of tire
- Maintaining proper tire pressure helps prevent flats and maximizes rolling efficiency
- Worn tires leave less rubber between the tube and the road, decreasing flat protection

Rims

- Spokes and sharp spots on the inside wall of the rim can cause flats
- Recurring flats are usually caused by sharp metal on the rim or part of a spoke
- Use a file or sandpaper to buff off the sharp spot and remove any burrs

Flat forensics

- Carefully studying where the hole in the tube will allow you to find its cause
- Make sure that you keep the wheel, tube and tire in the same orientation
- Flats may be caused by imperfections in the tube; these may be impossible to detect

Find the hole

- Pump tube with air; listen and feel around the tube for the leak
- Mark hole with chalk or hold under your thumb
- Use the sandpaper or another abrasive to rough up tube around hole

Apply glue

- Apply glue to the size of a quarter, centered around the hole
- Allow two to three minutes for glue to set; glue will turn cloudy
- Make sure that the glue area is slightly larger than the patch

Apply patch

- Remove patch with plastic still attached; do not peel plastic off of patch
- Place sticky, non-plastic side down, centered over hole
- Slide it around in a small circle to ensure even distribution of glue

Wait and hold

- Hold patch firmly between thumb and forefinger for about three minutes
- Time taken now will ensure that your patch will hold later down the road
- If at home, place tube flat between two books and place heavy object on top

Check it

- Inspect to make sure that the patch bonded to tube all the way around
- Plastic will keep glue from sticking to inside of tire; wipe off excess
- Patches can last forever if properly applied

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