

Flat Fix

DON'T GET CAUGHT OUT ON THE ROAD ■ BY TRICIA SZULEWSKI

EVER BEEN STRANDED ON THE SIDE OF THE road with a flat tire? Take my advice: Don't learn the hard way to carry a tire repair kit on your bike. Complete kits are available for as little as \$24.99, which is a hell of a lot less than the cost of a tow or a search-and-rescue party.

Plugging a tire is a simple repair, and most plug kits come with everything you need. It's not a bad idea to practice on an old tire at home so that you're prepared when you get a flat on the road. When choosing a plug kit, be sure that it includes at least a plug, a plug tool, cement, and an inflation device.

There are kits made specifically for tubed or tubeless tires, some offering extra CO₂ cartridges, different-size patches, extra air hoses and nozzles, and carrying cases. But very few tire repair kits include a tire pressure gauge, so make sure you always carry one.

If you have to make a roadside repair, try to get your bike as far as possible from traffic. Then inspect the tire for damage. Once you've found the leak, you can begin repairing the hole with your kit. Make sure you wait the recommended time to let the cement solidify, inflate the tire properly, and



be very careful riding with the patched tire. (Progressive Suspension recommends not exceeding 45 mph with its plug installed.) Remember that plugging a tire is only a temporary fix — you should replace the tire as soon as possible.

Here, Steve Lita shows you how to do this quick fix using Progressive Suspension's TRK-5 tire repair kit.

For \$65.95, Progressive Suspension's TRK-5 kit includes almost everything needed, except for a tire pressure gauge and a blade to cut the excess plug material.

WIN!

A Stop & Go Tire Repair Kit. See page 18 for details.



Got Air?

There are a number of ways to inflate your tires while on the road. Here are some lightweight, low-cost devices that you can carry on your bike. Some of these companies also offer tire repair kits.



Stop & Go Tire Inflation Kit and Cycle Pump



CO₂ GAS

The easiest and most portable devices are CO₂ canisters. They come in different sizes and specify the amount of psi you'll achieve. Make sure you carry enough to properly fill at least one tire.

J&P Cycles

The Ultraflate can be used on ATV, motorcycle, bicycle, and trailer tires, using both threaded and non-threaded CO₂ cartridges. A pressure control valve lets you use one cartridge on several tires. \$16.99.

Stop & Go

The Automatic Tire Inflation Kit includes four canisters containing 16 grams of high-velocity CO₂ gas. One canister gives the tire a boost of 8-9 pounds. \$21.95.

AIR COMPRESSORS

Mini compressors are a relatively fast way to fill up tires. Some power up by attaching to the bike battery with alligator clips, while others have cigarette lighter/BMW-type plugs.

Aerostich RiderWearhouse

The Cycle Pump comes in a sturdy aluminum case and weighs just 24 ounces. According to the company, the device will inflate a bike tire in two minutes. \$80.

Stop & Go

This mini compressor comes with a 10' electrical cord and can be plugged into either a lighter outlet or your bike battery. It includes a built-in pressure gauge, two nozzle adapters, a sports needle, and a quick-release lever. \$19.95.

AIR PUMPS

If you don't have room for an air compressor, here are some alternative air sources.

CruzTools

This engine-powered air pump comes with a 48" hose that you attach to a spark plug hole and a tire valve. As the engine runs, the vacuum created sucks in fresh air and inflates the tire. \$29.95.

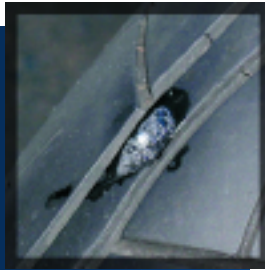
Mini Foot Pump

Weighing just 17 ounces, the Air Revolution uses a dual-cylinder design with a pressure release valve, a 0-70 psi gauge, a 32" air hose, a check valve, and taper and needle adapters. \$49.99.





If you find a nail, don't assume it's causing the leak in your tire. To check, wet the area with a generous amount of saliva. If it's leaking air, it will bubble. If it isn't, check for other flaws in the tire. Keep in mind, you'll still have to remove the nail and address any other leaks.



1 After determining that a nail was the source of the leak, Steve pulled it out.



2 He applied a generous amount of cement to the plug tool, stuck the tool in the hole, and rotated it back and forth to distribute the cement evenly and ream the hole. You'll be pushing on the tire forcefully, so make sure the bike's in gear and hold onto the rim.



3 Trying not to handle the sticky part, Steve placed the plug on the tip of the tool. He coated the plug with more cement and pushed it as far as possible into the hole. He then trimmed the plug with a sharp blade, leaving about 1/8" of rubber outside the tread. (It'll get flattened a bit once you get rolling.)



4 After letting the cement dry for 15 minutes, Steve pieced together the CO2 cartridge assembly and threaded the adapter hose onto the tire valve stem. Holding the cartridge vertically while pressing the trigger, it took only about five seconds to empty it. But be careful: The cartridge freezes when you do this, and it can hurt to hold it.



5 Finally, Steve checked the tire pressure, and then rode the bike carefully to a dealership to have a new tire installed. RB

SOURCES

AEROSTICH
RIDERWEARHOUSE
800/222-1994
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CRUZTOOLS
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