

TIRE CARE

Tire Pressure

It probably can't be said often enough: Check your tire pressure regularly! Ideally, check it every day before you ride. Under-inflated tires can cause loss of traction, lower gas mileage, premature or uneven wear, and increased risk of blowout.

Overinflated tires can increase your risk of a blowout.

Do not be confused by the air-pressure reading embossed on the tire's sidewall. This is the maximum air pressure for that tire, not the recommended pressure. The recommended air pressure depends on a number of factors, such as load, and whether you're riding one- or two-up.

Consult your Owner's Manual for the recommended pressures for the front and rear tires on your motorcycle. In fact, your Owner's Manual is the first place you should look for all-important information about your tires.

Wear/Tread Depth

Because maintaining traction is so much more crucial on a motorcycle than a car, motorcycle tires are made of softer compounds than car tires. This helps them grip the road better, but it also makes them wear out faster. So it's especially important to check the tread depth regularly. If you want to really do it right, you should inspect your tires (for tread depth, pressure, damage, and uneven wear) as part of your daily pre-ride inspection.

As you're inspecting your tire, check for wear patterns. Uneven tire-wear patterns can result in deteriorated handling in wet or other less-than-ideal conditions. Excessively worn tires are more susceptible to penetrations or failure, and also don't channel away water or road debris as effectively. It's important to remove a tire from service when it's worn to 1/32" of tread remaining.

One way to easily check this is with a standard U.S. penny. Stick the top of the penny into a groove in the center tread (with Lincoln's head pointing down). A depth of 1/32" is right at the top of Lincoln's head.

Some tires don't have any tread on the centerline, in which case it becomes necessary to look at the "wear bar" to determine tread depth. The wear bars are molded into the tread at regular intervals (look for a little arrow on the sidewall to help you find one) and become visible when it's time to replace the tire.