

Bicycle Maintenance

Many people who own bicycles feel that the only way to have them properly cared for is to take them to a bike shop. However, even the most mechanically uninclined people can learn the skills necessary to perform the simple bicycle maintenance that can keep them on the road.

The first step is to make sure you have the right tools for the job. Here are the most common tools people will need:

- adjustable wrenches,
- metric Allen wrenches,
- flat-head screwdriver,
- Phillips-head screwdriver,
- bicycle pump, and
- tire levers.

The most common problem for the bike rider is the flat tire. Luckily, it is also one of the easiest to fix. First, you remove the wheel from the bicycle, so that you can work with it more easily. To do this, you may need to use two adjustable wrenches, unless you have a quick-release system. Once the wheel is off the bike, use the tire levers to remove the tire from the wheel's rim. This can be hard at first, but once the lever is under the tire, you should be able to slide it all the way around, prying the tire off as you go.

After removing the tire, you can now access the tube, which is the part that contains the air. Depending on what type of flat you have, there are two things you can do at this point. The first is to patch the tube. To do this, pump the tube full of air so that you will be able to tell where the hole is. There will probably be a hissing sound, and you can feel the air escaping. You may need to fill a sink or bucket with water and submerge the tube so

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you can see the bubbles where the leak is. Once you have isolated the hole, you can apply a patch and put your wheel back together. If the hole is too big, you may need to replace your tube.

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