

## TTIPS VOL. 1/23 – INSIGHTS/SAFETY

### - When Do I Need to Replace My Bike's Tires? -

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### Introduction

Hello fellow riders, and Happy New Year. Time flies doesn't it? Here we are in 2023. To mark this occasion, we start with TTIPS 1/23.

I was asked recently by one of our club riders, "how do I know when to change my bike tires?" Good question. Good tires are extremely important to your safety. You should never ride on tires that you suspect are deficient in some way. Thus, I thought I would share the answer with everyone.

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### When Should I Change My Bike's Tires?

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#### TIRES IN STORAGE

First, let's make it clear that bike tires can expire, even if they have never been used. That's right. If you have "new tires" that have been on the shelf. Tires are made of rubber, and rubber deteriorates over time.

Bike tires that are stored properly should last for about 3-6 years, according to the bike manufacturer, Specialized. However, the exact lifespan will vary depending on the brand and condition of the tires, as well as their exposure to heat, moisture, etc. Under terrible conditions, bike tires could break down in a matter of months.

Here's what Specialized says: "Tires and tubes should be stored in a dark, cool, ventilated area. Heat, UV light, Ozone, and time degrade the rubber compound. The tires keep their performance level for about three years. Then the aging agents and softeners have dissipated enough to let you feel the difference in grip and suppleness. However, it is safe to use tires up to six years after manufacturing."

If you have the slightest doubt, do not use old tires. Better to buy new ones and be sure they are safe than to risk tire failure during a ride.

OK then, how should tires be stored. Well, I'm glad you asked. Read on.

### **THREE COMMON REASONS TIRES IN STORAGE GO BAD**

#### **1. Exposure to Excessive Heat and Light**

Excessive heat and light are rough on a batch of materials. Rubber is no exception. **Leave your tires in a hot garage or with full sun exposure for an extended period of time, and they'll begin to dry out and lose their "rubberiness."** Kind of like an old rubber band that breaks rather than stretches, tires become very brittle when they dry out.

#### **2. Exposure to Excessive Moisture**

If your tires are exposed to excessive and prolonged moisture, they'll get moldy and begin to rot.

#### **3. Lack of Ventilation**

Airflow is essential for wicking away heat and moisture.

If you store your bike tires in a poorly ventilated area, the effects of exposure to heat, light and moisture will be compounded. This will cause the rubber to degrade faster, thereby reducing its performance to a greater degree.

## TIRES IN USE

Bicycle tires “in use” wear with age, too. If your bike is stored your tread will not wear out but your tires can harden and crack with age. If you ride often, but your bike tires are cracking or fraying, do not ride your bike until you’ve replaced your tires. If you are riding on tires that look good, but are more than six years old, you should probably get new ones.

Here are sure signs that you should replace the tires on your bike:

1. Worn down tread. Easy to spot.
2. Flat spot along the center of the tire.
3. Cracked rubber.
4. Constant flats.
5. Cuts and holes.
6. Worn down to the casing.
7. Cotton threads showing through the rubber
8. Bubbles or deformities.
9. Rhythmic thumping feeling as you ride
10. Broken bead (the bead is the wire that runs continuously along the inner circumference on both inner edges of the tire and tucks into the rim hook when inflated).

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All right, that’s all for now. Until next time,

Make Every Ride Epic,

Darryl