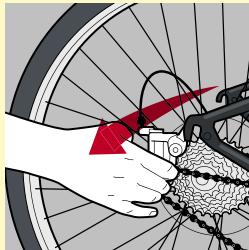


6

Simple Steps to Change a Flat

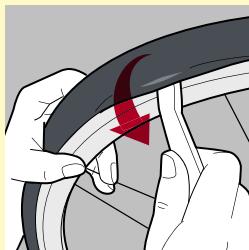
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AN IDIOT-PROOF GUIDE FOR YOU OR A BEGINNER FRIEND—IF I CAN DO THIS, SO CAN YOU.



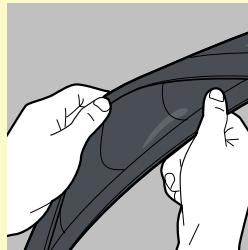
1 DETACH THE WHEEL FROM THE BIKE

The front is easy: Release the brake, open the quick-release lever, loosen the skewer and pull the wheel from the fork dropouts. The back is harder. Shift to the smallest cog to make reinstallation relatively easier. If you're on your bike when you notice the flat, shift as you slow down. Loosen the brakes and skewer, pull down on the derailleur and slide the wheel out. Lay your bike, chain side up, by the side of the road.



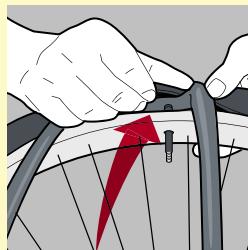
2 GET THE TIRE OFF THE WHEEL

You may or may not need tire levers. If you do, jam the flat end of the lever between the rim and the tire, and scoop it under the bead. Then push down on the lever and hook the other end of it to the spoke. Insert another lever less than 2 inches away from the anchored one, and repeat, which should loosen the bead enough that you can unseat the bead all the way around. Remove the blown tube.



3 INSPECT THE TIRE

Using your fingers and your eyes, check the tire inside and out for whatever caused the flat. Take your time and remove all suspicious matter. Back-to-back flats are sure to kill the will to ride.



4 INSTALL THE NEW TUBE

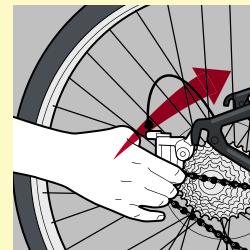
Twist open the valve of the new tube and use either your minipump or mouth to add a tiny bit of air, which makes it easier to stuff into the tire. Thread the valve into the hole in the rim; this will serve as an anchor as you push the rest of the tube into the tire.



5 KNEAD THE TIRE BACK ONTO THE RIM

The key to not losing your mind by having the part of

the tire slip off where you just put it on: Hold one hand at the top, and work around the wheel with the other. Once you have half the tire secure, you can let go with your anchor hand. Use a lever for the last little bit if you need to, but be very careful not to pinch any protruding bits of tube. Then give it a check: Squeeze both sides of the tire as you work around the wheel, making sure none of the tube is poking out under the bead. Pump it up. A CO₂ cartridge, a submarine-shaped vessel of air that attaches to the tube's valve via a special chuck, is the only way I'll inflate on the side of the road. Following the instructions on the packaging is remarkably easy. Minipumps take a lot of elbow grease, but are good for an infinite number of tires.



6 REATTACH THE WHEEL

On the front: Fit the fork onto the skewer (the QR lever goes on the left side of the bike) and tighten; don't forget to flip the brake QR down. For the rear: Hold up the bike's back half, then focus on one thing: getting the wheel positioned so that the cogs are anywhere in between the chain. Then set the bike down and tweak until the frame and wheel are properly mated—it often takes me at least a minute. Tighten the skewer and brake, then roll.—D.M.