



# BICYCLE MAINTENANCE TOOLS FOR THE ROAD

## Know your ability

- Take tools for work that you can perform
- Try to fix things if you are sure that you can improve how they work
- Do not depend on others for your mechanical needs

## Know your bike

- Maintain your bike or let a bike shop do it for you; twice a year for heavy use
- Catch problems before they happen on the road with regular inspections
- If you have hard to find items on your bike, stock up when you can

## Know your ride

- If you are going to be far from civilization, prepare with extra tools or parts
- For short rides, you might not carry any tools if you don't mind walking
- Urban areas may have more glass in the roadway; bring patches and a tube

## Know your tools

- Tire levers, tube, pump and patch kit for flats
- Allen wrenches, chain tool and screwdriver for mechanicals
- Understand which tools are needed for your bike; tools don't fix things, people do

## Know your options

- If you carry a phone for emergencies, make sure you have reception on your ride
- First aid can be an important part of a tool kit; know how to use it
- Stop to help others but only attempt to fix what you know you can

## Tire maintenance

- Tires naturally lose air over time; if you don't pump them up, they will go flat
- Floor pumps work best at home; they move the most air and are easy to use
- Skinny tires need air almost daily; fat tires need air weekly

## Tire emergencies

- Hand pumps work well in emergency situations; convenience over performance
- CO2 is fast and easy but can be tricky; carry a pump as backup
- Long skinny pumps for high-pressure skinny tires; short fat pumps for fat tires

## Valves

- Know your valves, presta or schraeder; carry an adapter just in case
- Both types of valves can be damaged; some tire sealants can clog valves
- Presta valves tend to hold air better than schraeder valves

## Pressure preference

- Recommended pressure is printed on tires; be careful if you go higher or lower
- Mountain bike commuters frequently inflate tires to 80 psi for faster going
- Tandem riders can inflate hybrid tires to 90 psi or more

## Air pressure tips

- Use the largest tube that fits your tire; it will hold air longer and resist flats better
- Check your tire pressure with a gauge before every ride
- Find a favorite pressure for your tires and stick to it; it may change with different tires

For more  
cycling tips, visit  
[bikeleague.org](http://bikeleague.org)

