



## ***Proper Tire Inflation Does Wonders For the Life of a Bicycle***

***Probably, the number one reason bikes fall apart is because people ignore the tires. Here's what happens: Bicycle tires have very little air in them. And bicycle tubes, which are made of butyl rubber, are porous enough to allow air to seep out. The result is tires softening over a period of about a week for road bikes and about a month for mountain bikes (though it depends some on tire size).***

***When the tires get soft, bad things happen. Some folks decide to stop riding the bike because they think they have flat tires and they put off getting the flat fixed because it means loading the bike in the car and dragging it down to the bike shop.***

***Others (and this is more common) don't realize that the tires have softened and ride the bike anyway. Unfortunately, if you ride with soft tires, there's a risk of rim and tube or tire damage should you hit a pothole or rock. The impact compresses the tire, allowing the object to smack into the rim, possibly bending the rim and puncturing the tube. Worse yet, if you continue to ride on a low tire the valve will become crooked to the rim causing stress to the stem and pulling it off the tube or cutting into the side of it. Besides this, it's much harder to pedal a bike with soft tires, and the tires wear quicker when used underinflated.***

***These reasons ought to be enough to convince you that it's best to regularly inflate the tires. Road bikes should be checked before every ride and mountain bikes at least weekly. Use a good pump that has a built-in gauge and follow the manufacturer's recommended pressure, which is written on the tire sidewalls.***