



TIRE TIPS

Getting the Right Tire at the Best Value

(NAPSA)—You don't have to wheel and deal to get the right tires at the best price. Just turn to these tire tips.

"When tire shopping, keep in mind that there is a difference between the lowest price and the best value," advises Erik Olsen, vice president, Michelin Americas Small Tires. He offers the following tips:

1. Know when to replace your tires. Even the best tires wear out with time, distance and a variety of weather and road conditions. One of the simplest ways to know when to replace tires is to check the tread depth. All tires have tread-wear indicator bars molded into the treads. When the tread is worn down to where you can see a solid bar of rubber across the width of the tread, it's time to replace the tire. You can also get help from Abraham Lincoln. Take a penny, and with Lincoln's head down, put it into the tread grooves. If you can clearly see all of Lincoln's head, the tread depth is low and you probably need new tires. Also, look for irregular tire wear and check for cuts, tears or bulges in the tire's sidewall.

2. Buy the right tire for your vehicle. Tires come in several types: Highway tires, designed for wet and dry weather driving but not for use on snow or ice; snow tires, which provide maximum traction in winter conditions; all-season tires, providing good balance for drivers looking for increased traction in rain and



Everything your vehicle does happens through four 6-by-8 inch contact points where your tires meet the road.

snow as well as the handling, ride and tread-wear benefits of a highway tire; and performance tires, focusing on better handling, grip and cornering. Next, make sure you buy the right size. Check the owner's manual or the vehicle placard located on the driver's door post, the fuel filler door or the glove compartment lid. Then, check the Uniform Tire Grade ratings, which provide key information about:

- Treadwear grades, which range from 60 to 620. The higher the grade, the longer the tread life.
- Traction grades AA to C, indicating a tire's braking performance. AA signifies the best traction.
- Temperature grades A to C, which represent a tire's ability to withstand heat. "A" signifies the most resistant.

Take Care of Your New Tires

Maintenance tips to help your tires perform better and last longer:

- Check each tire's air pressure (including your spare) once a month and before any long trip. Always check tires when they're "cold."
- Have your tires rotated every 6,000 to 8,000 miles or as recommended by the owner's manual.
- Properly balance your tires to prevent shimmying (shaking side to side) and tramping (hopping up and down).
- Clean your tires with soap and water to keep debris from degrading them.
- Check your tires once a month. Look for uneven wear and stones or nails wedged in the tread. If a tire continually needs air, have it checked. 

3. Shop for the best value.

Once you know the kind of tire you need, you can call or visit an experienced tire retailer such as Wal-Mart Tire & Lube Express. Be sure to ask for the total package price, which includes rotation and balancing over the life of the tire.

"New tires can improve the safety and comfort of your ride," says Ken Reese, director of operations for Wal-Mart's 1,500 Tire & Lube Express outlets across the United States. "And knowing that you've bought the right tire at the right price gives you an added dimension—peace of mind."