



How Do I Know If My Tires Need to Be Balanced?

[Tire balancing](#) is a tune-up for your wheel-tire set. It makes sure that weight is evenly distributed around the entire circumference of the unit. The common symptoms of out-of-balance tires are uneven and faster tread wear, poor fuel economy, and vibration in the steering wheel, the floorboard or the seat that gets worse at faster speeds.

When all areas of the wheel-tire unit are as equal in weight as possible, the tire will roll smoothly. This helps it wear evenly, for longest life. Balancing also contributes to ride comfort: Imbalanced tires will wobble or hop up and down, which causes vibration. If a front tire isn't properly balanced you'll likely feel vibration in the steering wheel. If the problem is in the rear the tremor will be noticeable in the seat or floor.

Imbalanced tires are easily corrected, but the work is precise. It's done by attaching small weights, just fractions of ounces, to the wheel.

How Do Wheels Get Out of Balance?

Everyday wear on tires will contribute to imbalance. Normal manufacturing imperfections are also a cause: Tires and wheels don't have precisely equal weight distribution. They'll be slightly heavier in some spots.

Just half an ounce in weight difference is enough to cause a vibration when you're driving.

How Tires Are Rebalanced

Rebalancing is done in a tire shop by putting the wheel-tire unit on a tire balancing machine that takes measurements to pinpoint lighter or heavier areas and making adjustments to account for these weight differences. The best time to get it done is when tires are being rotated, both for convenience and because you might have a tire out of balance on the rear of the vehicle and won't feel it until it is moved to the front.

Here's how it's done:

1. A tire mounted on a wheel is attached to a tire balancing machine.

1. The wheel is spun while vibration measurements are taken. This tells the tech if the weight is spread evenly, how much weight to add and where on the wheel to attach it.
1. If an imbalance is found, the technician may be able to rebalance and adjust the weights (adding more). But sometimes it requires the tech to also move the tire on the wheel and then rebalance. This is because a heavy spot on the wheel and on the tire can sometimes line up together, causing a greater imbalance that needs to be corrected

Balancing Versus Alignment

Though both should be part of regular auto maintenance, balancing isn't the same as getting an alignment. Wheel alignment corrects the angles of the tires so they travel in the same direction and make contact with the road properly. Alignment reduces uneven tire wear and extends the life of your tires. Oftentimes tire balancing and alignment are perceived to be the same thing, but are not.

When to Get Tire Balancing Done:

- You feel vibration in the steering wheel, the floorboard or your seat.
- You get them rotated, generally every 5,000 miles.
- At the very least every two years, once yearly if you drive rough roads.
- You get a flat and repair a tire.
- You buy any new tire(s).
- A weight that used to be on the rim falls off.
- You notice uneven tire wear.

Tire balancing and rotation are often done at the same time, but they aren't the same service. Tire rotation is when a vehicle's front and rear wheels are switched to even out tread wear between them. Since both require removing each wheel, it's convenient to do them at the same time.

Vibration when underway could be caused by an imbalanced tire and wheel assembly or something else — a bent wheel, a damaged tire (which won't be fixed by balancing), worn suspension parts or other aging components. If you feel a vibration, don't wait to get it diagnosed. You'll head off other problems — and enjoy a smoother ride — when your tires are well balanced.

Also Know - [Why is Tyre Balancing Required For Vehicles](#)

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