

Get going

with Sustrans

Repair a puncture

Often people leave bikes languishing in the garage because they have a puncture. However, fixing a puncture is a simple task and requires only a small amount of equipment.

FILM This information sheet should be used in conjunction with the Sustrans film 'Repair a puncture' available at tinyurl.com/repairpuncture

Activity instructions

1 Remove the wheel

Release the brakes and flip the bike over. Undo the quick-release lever or bolts and remove the wheel.

2 Find the puncture

Starting at the valve, check tyre for any obvious causes (nails, thorns, glass, etc). Release any remaining air using the valve (there are two types, Presta and Schrader, which work differently).

Starting opposite the valve, insert the first tyre lever and hook it onto one of your spokes. Insert the second tyre lever next to it then run this around the rim to release one side of the tyre.

Remove the inner tube, starting opposite the valve. You should be able to remove the inner tube without having to take the whole tyre off.

Inflate the inner tube with a few pumps then check the whole tube, starting from the valve and work way around and back to the start. Depending on the size of the hole, it may not be obvious.

When you find the hole, mark it with a crayon or lightly with a pen, then keep looking as there may be more than one hole.

3 Fix the puncture

Use the sand/abrasive paper in your puncture kit to roughen an area around the hole, a little bigger than the size of the patch. This helps the patch stick to the inner tube. Use the valve to release any remaining air from the inner tube.

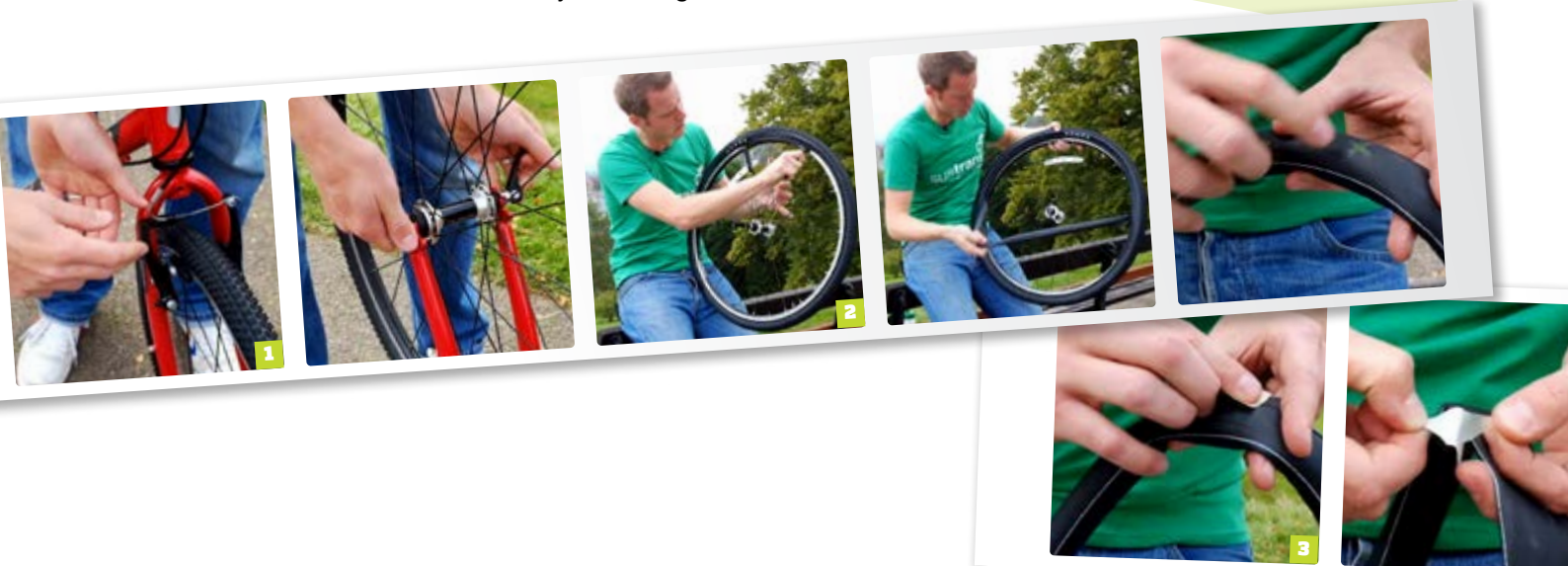
What you need

- › Tyre levers
- › Puncture kit (quick repair kits are the simplest)
- › Spanner, if you don't have quick-release wheels
- › Pump
- › Water
- › Crayon or pen

Tip

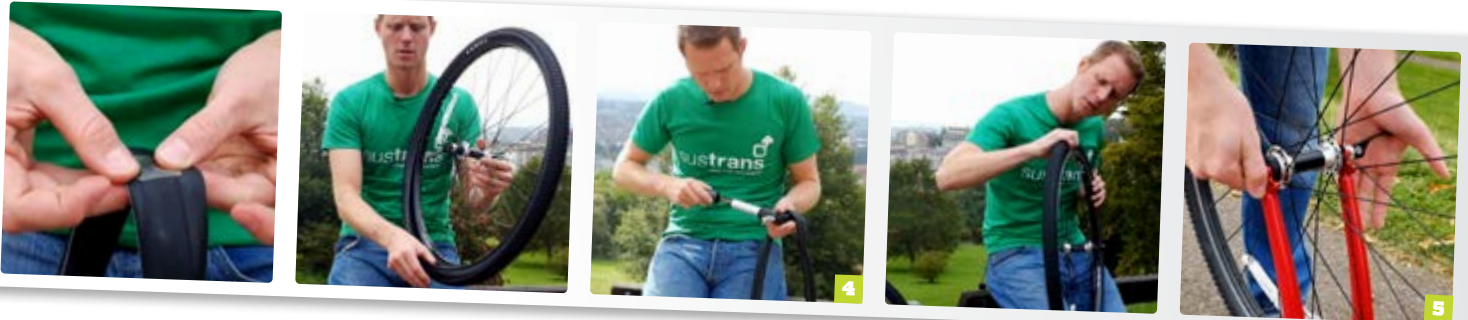
If you can't find the hole, see if you can feel the escaping air on your chin or cheek or submerge the inner tube in a bowl or bucket of water – bubbles will tell you where it is. You can also check for bubbles using water from a bottle.

If the inner tube is split, rather than a hole, or the leak is from the valve itself, we recommend replacing the inner tube.



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Repair a puncture (continued)



3 Fix the puncture (continued)

Choose an appropriately-sized patch. Remove the backing paper to reveal the sticky side – avoid touching this side. Apply the patch over the hole so that the hole is in the middle of the patch. Push down firmly, ensuring there are no bubbles, creases or upturned edges.

Check the inside of the tyre to see if you can find the cause of the puncture – take care in case there is anything sharp. Remove anything you find.

If chalk is supplied in your kit, grate some over any exposed sticky areas to prevent this adhering to the tyre. You may wish to check you have mended the puncture correctly (or haven't missed another hole) by inflating with a few pumps and re-checking as in step 2.

4 Put it back together

Put a few pumps of air into the inner tube to give it some shape, then locate the valve hole in the wheel and push the valve through.

Feed the inner tube into the tyre. This is often easiest starting at the valve and working your way around with both hands opposite directions, finishing at the point furthest from the valve. Now release any air you pumped in.

Re-mount the tyre, starting at the valve and working your way around either side. The last bit of the tyre should be re-mounted furthest from the valve. Ease of remounting depends on how loose the tyre is, which is influenced by the tyre materials and how many times it has been removed and remounted.

Put a few pumps of air into the inner tube and check the tyre is seated correctly in the wheel. Check that the inner tube is not caught anywhere in the tyre rim, then pump up the tyre to the correct pressure and replace the dust cap on the valve.

5 Refit the wheel

Refit the wheel on the bike and do up the quick-release lever or bolts. Turn the bike back over and reconnect the brakes. Check that the quick-release lever or bolts are tight and that the brakes work correctly.

Tip

If you are using a traditional puncture kit that comes with vulcanizing fluid/rubber solution, then apply this, following any safety guidance supplied. The area of fluid should be slightly larger than the size of the patch. Leave the fluid to dry as specified (or encourage drying by blowing gently).

A 'snake bite' puncture can occur when a tyre is not inflated enough, causing the rim of the wheel to make two parallel 'bites' in the inner tube. Avoid 'snakes bite' punctures by inflating your tyres to the recommended pressure, usually written on the side of the tyre

If you have had to remove or replace the whole tyre, make sure it is refitted in the correct direction. This is sometimes specified on the side of the tyre or indicated by the tread pattern

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