

Advantages Of Folding Tires

Folding tires (illustration) make a significant difference in handling and ride quality. For example, there's road rubber that uses special materials and construction to improve the suppleness of the tire, resulting in a much smoother ride. And, there are models designed for sky-high pressures, which on super-smooth surfaces, reduce rolling resistance and assist all-out racing efforts. And all folding tires are lighter for improved climbing and acceleration.



Carry A Spare

An often-overlooked advantage of these folding road tires is that it's easy to carry a spare. Folders pack small enough to fit in a seat bag, jersey pocket or suitcase (when you travel with your bike). This means that you can easily carry a replacement if you're concerned that one of your tires is ready to fail.

Easy On And Off

You'll also find that folding tires, both road and dirt models, are usually easier to remove and install. This is because the Kevlar beads are more flexible and because the tires stretch slightly with use.

Innovations In Off-Road Rubber

The biggest advance in tire technology recently is the advent of tubeless off-road tires. These still use air, but like car tires, an airtight seal is formed at the rim to eliminate the need for a tube and rim strip. Although they usually require the use of a special rim, these tires are gaining in popularity because you can run lower pressures than with conventional tires with no risk of pinch flatting.

The soft pressure, combined with a suppleness that results from the elimination of the friction between the tube and the tire, allows tubeless knobbies to grip better in corners and provide more suspension and speed over stutter bumps, roots and rough terrain. Climbing traction improves a lot, too. And, in the event of a puncture, the construction of these new tubulars is such that air leaks out slower than with a conventional tire and tube – usually slow enough to ride home. Plus, if you get a flat that releases the air immediately, you can easily fix the tire by installing a regular tube and inflating as with normal tires and tubes.