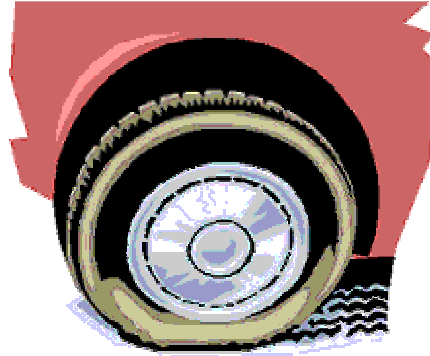


## Changing a wheel

Some drivers never get a flat tyre. I find that they tend to come in threes! I can go ten years without a puncture and then I get three in the same month.

You can drive around hoping that it won't happen, call the AA or stand and luck helpless at the side of the road. Or you can learn how easy it is to change a wheel. It will take about 25 minutes the first time you do it. These are the steps to take.



## Find out about your car

On a warm sunny afternoon, park your car on the driveway or a flat car park and take out all the wheel changing bits, There should be a jack to lift the car up, a spare wheel and a wheel brace (this is a kind of spanner thing!). Take all these things out of the car before starting the wheel changing process.

## Wheel change check sheet

<i>Tick</i>	<i>Steps</i>
	1. Remove the wheel trim
	2. Loosen the wheel nuts
	3. Jack up the car
	4. Take off the wheel
	5. Put on the good wheel
	6. Replace the wheel nuts
	7. Lower the car
	8. Replace the trim

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## ***1. Remove the trim***

Take off the wheel trim - the wheel trim is the bit that makes the wheel look pretty. Some cars have alloy wheels (shiny grey coloured metal) - these don't usually have wheel trims. The wheel brace will often have a flat end that can be used to prise off the wheel trim, if not a screwdriver or similar tool or object will do the job.

## ***2. Loosen the wheel nuts***

Loosen the wheel nuts with the wheel brace (spanner thing!). They are sometimes quite tight (Join the AA, RAC or similar). By sliding a length of steel pipe, 40 to 60cm long should be enough, on to the end of the wheel brace, you can get more leverage.

If you lack strength, for whatever reason, it might be worth investing in a long handled wrench (spanner thing!) to keep with the wheel change stuff in your boot.

## ***3. Jack up the car***

Jack up the car. Be careful to ensure that the jack is located at the right point beneath the car - it is important that you check the handbook to locate the jacking point, it will vary from car to car. Make sure that the handbrake is on. If changing a rear tyre it is a good idea to 'chock' the front wheels with bricks, stones, wooden blocks or whatever you can find by the roadside.

## ***4. Take off the wheel***

Remove the wheel nuts and take off the wheel. Make sure that you put the wheel nuts in a safe place; they have a habit of rolling off into the grass, or worse, down a grid!

Be careful when removing the wheel, the tyre might have debris embedded that could cause a nasty cut ...

## ***5. Put on the good wheel***

Put on the spare wheel. Note: when replacing a flat tyre you might need to raise the car a bit higher on the jack to make room for the spare.

It can sometimes be a bit tricky to get the wheel in place, be patient (or you might damage the threads on the wheel studs - the bits that the nuts screw on to). It might help to get one stud in place and then gently swing the wheel in to place.

## **6. Replace the wheel nuts**

Replace the wheel nuts - finger tight at first and then just a bit tighter using the spanner thing (wheel brace). Note: if the nuts have a bevelled edge it goes on the inside with the flat edge to the outside.

## **7. Lower the car**

Lower the car to the ground and then tighten the wheel nuts - generally speaking, you should get them as tight as you can (using the wheel brace) by hand.

## **8. Replace the trim**

Replace the wheel trim (get one side fitted and then give it a sharp thump!). In a real puncture situation you would leave this bit until you get home.

## **'Real life' punctures**

Make sure the jack is on a firm surface. Falling cars can break arms and legs and cost lots of money to repair!

Be very aware of other traffic, use a warning triangle and wear something bright (a fluorescent waistcoat only costs a few pounds and can be kept in the car).

Make sure you put everything back in the car when you finish!

If your car has a 'skinny' space saver spare wheel keep your speed below 50 mph. Get your puncture repaired as soon as possible and, if you are in any doubt, have someone check that your wheel is fitted properly.