



changing a FLAT

"The worst time to learn how to change a flat tire is when you're stuck on the side of the road, in the middle of nowhere," says Lucille Treganow, author of *Lucille's Car Care* (Hyperion). Before broken glass or a nasty pothole deflates one of your tires, brush up on your changing skills now:

1. If you suspect you've got a flat, pull over to a safe, level spot immediately; the more you drive, the more you'll ruin the tire and wheel.
2. Move an automatic transmission into "park" or a manual transmission into first gear. Put on emergency brake.
3. Put on your flashers and open your hood to alert other drivers to your emergency situation.

4. From your trunk, remove the following: jack, spare tire, standard screwdriver, lug wrench, penetrating oil, floss rag, work gloves, rubber hammer, and check (a wooden wedge that prevents car from sliding).
5. Place chock under the wheel diagonally across from the flat tire.
6. Kneel on rug and use screwdriver to remove hubcap. If your car has a wheel lock feature, engage it now.
7. Loosen all lug nuts on the wheel with lug wrench before wheel is raised, while you still have good ground leverage. If lug nuts won't budge, give them a quick spray of penetrating oil, such as WD-40.
8. Fit the jack underneath car according to its instructions, and raise car until flat tire is 2 to 3 inches off the ground.
9. Remove the loosened lug nuts and the wheel. Place all lug nuts in the upside-down hubcap for safekeeping.
10. Fit the spare onto car and replace lug nuts; remember the tapered side of lug nut goes against the wheel.
11. Lower the car to the ground, then use lug wrench to fully tighten each lug nut. It doesn't matter which one you start with, but tighten lug nuts in a crisscross pattern.
12. Gently tap hubcap back into place with the rubber hammer.

13. Put everything back in trunk and head for a repair shop. **Note:** Aerosol tire inflators contain a substance that stops air leaks and inflates the tire. But be careful: These are effective only on small leaks, not total blowouts.

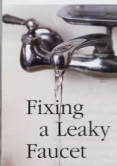
If you feel uneasy about your situation and there's no phone nearby, put on your flashers or hazard lights and stay inside your car until a police officer arrives.



pressing a new LEAF

Using leaves for interior decorations will give your home an earthy look. To press leaves, follow these hints from Laura Donnelly Behnken, artist and author of *Nature Printing With Herbs, Fruits & Flowers* (Storey Publishing).

1. Collect pretty, flat leaves. (Early ones will end up getting crushed.)
2. Use leaves right away or store them in the refrigerator, in a plastic bag, for up to two days.
3. When you're ready to press the leaves, break off excess soil with a soft artist's brush.
4. Place the leaf with its veins face up, in an open telephone book.
5. Write the date and a short description of the leaf on a self-stick note and tab the page.
6. Cover the leaf with a half-inch of the book's pages, then start again with the next leaf.
7. Leaves usually dry in four to five days, but can take up to a week. They should be completely devoid of moisture, yet not so brittle they crack when mounted.
8. Mount them with small dots of glue to a piece of cardboard covered in attractive paper. Frame and hang.



Fixing a Leaky Faucet

What causes a faucet to drip, drip, drip? The most likely culprit, says Wlad Wrangén, a fit-it guru at Home Depot in Bloomfield, New Jersey, is a worn-out washer, valve seat, or both. To stop the leak without calling a costly plumber, buy the replacement parts at a hardware store or from the manufacturer. Then follow Wrangén's simple steps:

- Turn off the main water line, usually found underneath the sink.
- Pull or turn off the decorative cap marked "hot" or "cold" on the handle.
- With an adjustable wrench, twist off the packing nut (a dome-like piece above the faucet's stem).
- Now you're close to the problem. Pull out the stem (a long threaded tube of metal) and replace the stem's bottom washer (another dome-like piece at the end of the stem).
- Run your finger around the valve seat and check for roughness. If you feel any chips or nicks, remove

the seat with a seat wrench and replace it with a new valve seat. Most new faucets are outfitted with ceramic disks instead of rubber washers. These washerless stems almost never leak, so if you need to remove the entire stem, make sure you go with the washerless one and you'll probably never be bothered by persistent drips again.