



MIKES CORVETTE CORNER

One of the most frustrating things about having a flat tire is discovering your spare tire is also not in good shape. But even if your spare is in usable, there is another problem you may encounter: lug nuts or a wheel that simply won't loosen. And, if you can't loosen either, then you won't be able to change the tire. The following lug nut removal tips and tricks will help you get the job done and send you quickly on your way. Even though many of our Corvettes do not have spares, these tips should come in handy one day.

Lug Nut Basics

Lug nuts are what hold a wheel to threaded studs and connect to the axle. Securely tightened lug nuts are the best insurance for preventing a wheel from loosening, which can have disastrous consequences if it occurs. Passenger vehicles usually come with one of three lug nut types: conical/tapered, ball/radius or flat. If you make changes to your wheels after acquiring your vehicle, such as choosing aftermarket alloy wheels, new hardware may be required.

If you have aftermarket wheels it's important to keep an extra set of lug nuts in your trunk, or in some other storage compartment, in the event you use a factory-supplied wheel and tire. Usually the spare can only be fitted with the original equipment lug hardware, that's if you have one in your Corvette.

Lug Nut Removal Tips and Tricks

To begin, carefully follow your car's wheel removal instructions, typically found in the owner's manual or on a sticker located in the vicinity of the spare tire. I know that many of us do not drive our Vettes in the winter, but some of these issues still apply.

Snow, salt and rust can take a toll on your car, especially on the lug nuts, causing them to stick. If the lug nuts are still stuck even after repeating the prescribed removal pattern, then you'll need to use a wire brush to remove all visible rust off the threads. That step alone is usually enough to loosen things up and allow you to continue with your lug nut removal.

What If the Wheel is Stuck?

Some of us Corvette owners haven't taken their wheels off in years, so this is where this tip needs to be understood.

Another problem you may encounter after removing the lug nuts is a wheel stuck in place. Over time, a wheel and the hub it fits around can become fused, making it more difficult to remove the wheel. In this situation, it's recommended that you loosen the lug nuts just a little, or about one-quarter of a turn (do NOT remove the lug nut). Next, get behind the wheel of the car and drive it for 10 feet before stopping suddenly. Then put the transmission in reverse and slam on the brakes once you have traveled 10 feet. The back and forth motions along with suddenly stopping your car each time should have the intended effect of loosening your wheel. Of course, you need to follow each of the other steps related to changing a tire before you complete your work.

Get Ahead of the Problem

You can also get proactive and prevent future problems by checking for corrosion in two places around the wheel: on the outside of the hub protrusion as well as the inside of the hole in the wheel.

Remove rust by applying sandpaper to the affected area, then remove the wheel. Next, a light application to cover both surfaces in [wheel bearing grease](#) before

returning the wheel to its proper place. Do this twice per year and you should avoid a repeat of the problem. But I actually like to use the IXL grease, put on very lightly around the hub, and you wont have to do this for three years. I just took off my right rear wheel after 3 years after applying IXL grease and there were no issues.

Mike