

Changing Your Own Brake Pads: Important Dos and Don'ts

Each time you press your brake pedal, your car's brake pads are gradually worn down. Eventually, they will need to be replaced to ensure safe braking. If your brake pads are in need of replacing, you might want to consider replacing them yourself as a means of saving some money. It's a relatively simple job, but there are some important tips to keep in mind if you decide to try this at home.

DO Use a Jack Stand

You'll need to lift your car up to access the brake pads, since the tires will need to be removed to do so. Don't rely on just a standard hydraulic jack for these purposes, however. You're going to be working under your car, so you'll want to have a backup jack stand in place to ensure your safety in the event that your hydraulic jack fails. And as always when lifting a vehicle, make sure you're on a flat and level surface.

DON'T Install Them Backwards

Once you're able to remove your tires, you'll need to use a wrench to remove the bolts holding your old brake pads into place. This usually involves removing just two screws or bolts on each pad (no need to remove the entire bracket). Be sure to read the packaging on your new brake pads carefully to ensure you install them correctly. The pads themselves should *always* be facing the rotors. If you install them backwards, you could end up damaging your rotors, which are a lot more expensive and difficult to replace!

DO Pump the Brake Pedal

Once your brake pads are installed and your tires are back on, it's time to go for a little test drive. Before you start driving, however, *be sure* to pump the brake pedal! This will put the piston back into place, which will ensure that your brakes are ready to be used. If you fail to pump the brake pedal, you may not be able to stop quickly the first time you try to use your brakes, which could be disastrous.

DON'T Hesitate to Call for Help

If at any point during the process of installing your new brake pads, you run into trouble, be sure to call a local brake service specialist (like those at Precision Automotive) for help. The last thing you want is to make a mistake that leads to more costly repairs down the road. A brake specialist will be able to assist you in making sure your new brake pads are properly installed.