



Your First Flat Tire or Car Trouble: Now What?

Your No-Stress Guide to Not
Freaking Out When Your Car Says
“Nope”



Cruising to class when- uh oh -flat tire, weird noise, or a dashboard light of doom?

This guide helps you stay calm, fix it smart, and get rolling again.

Like a road trip buddy with snacks, jumper cables, and good vibes.



Stay Calm, Stay Safe

**Whatever's going on – breathe first,
panic second (if at all).**

- Pull over safely. Use your hazard lights. Avoid hills or curves.
- If on the highway, pull to the right shoulder, not the median.
- Stay in the car if it's unsafe to exit.
- Use your phone's flashlight or emergency blinkers if it's dark.

Keep a safety kit in your trunk—jumper cables, flashlight, poncho, granola bar. You'll thank yourself later.





Flat Tire?

Here's What to Do

If you're in a safe place, you can try changing it:

- Park, brake, and turn on hazards.
- Get the spare tire, jack, and lug wrench from the trunk.
- Loosen the lug nuts (lefty loosey), jack the car, remove the nuts, replace tire, tighten nuts.
- Only drive short distances on a spare ("donut" = 50 miles max).

If not comfortable doing it yourself:

- Call roadside assistance (many schools or insurance plans include it).
- Stay in the car and wait in a safe spot.

Don't forget to get the flat tire repaired or replaced soon. Donuts aren't forever.





Dead Battery?

Here's the Jumpstart Checklist

- Park another car nose-to-nose. Turn both off.
- Clamp red to your dead battery's positive (+)
- Clamp red to the other car's positive (+)
- Clamp black to the other car's negative (-)
- Clamp final black to unpainted metal on your car (not the battery)
- Start the working car, then try yours after 2–3 mins
- Once it starts, remove cables in reverse order.

Drive around for 20–30 minutes after a jumpstart so the battery can recharge.





Weird Dashboard Light? Don't Ignore It

- Check engine light: Still running fine? Make an appointment. Flashing? Pull over and stop.
- Oil or temp light: Pull over and don't keep driving—could damage your engine.
- Tire pressure: Check your tires soon. A slow leak can sneak up on you.
- Battery light: You might have a few minutes. Turn off AC, radio, and drive straight to help.

Use Google or your owner's manual to decode any icon you don't recognize.





Calling for Help?

Be Ready to Say...

- Where you are (look for landmarks, mile markers, cross streets)
- What's wrong ("Flat tire," "Won't start," "Weird smell," etc.)
- If you're in a safe place or need urgent assistance
- Whether you have a spare tire or tools (they'll ask!)

Screenshot your insurance info and keep roadside numbers in your phone.





Emergency Kit Must-Haves (College Edition)

- Jumper cables
- Tire pressure gauge
- Hazard cones/flares
- Flashlight + extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Blanket or hoodie
- Portable phone charger
- Bottled water + snack
- \$10–\$20 cash

You don't need to be a mechanic—just prepared enough to not panic.





Last but Not Least...

Having car trouble isn't a failure—it's a rite of passage. Every driver has a story.

You handled it. You stayed calm. You learned something.

And next time? You'll be even better.



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