

CYCLOPEDIA

Questions answered, subjects explained – Cyclopedia is your bimonthly cycling reference guide



Right & car photo: Alamy

Right and opposite: Alamy



Your Experts



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Retired GP
{Health}



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Technical

Latex tube failure

Q Riding to the start of a time trial recently, one of my 700×23C Michelin AirComp latex innertubes failed. There was no puncture and the Presta valve was closed. The oval-shaped rubber pad around the base of the valve had an adhesive bond failure. I've had another fail in the same way, suggesting a manufacturing defect. Can I use a standard puncture repair rubber solution to fix it back in place? Or should I just give up and use butyl tubes? The reason for using a latex tube was to reduce the risk of punctures and provide a better ride quality.
Andrew Porter

A The fabled ride and puncture-resistant qualities of latex innertubes have tempted many a performance-minded cyclist, often with the result you describe. Latex tubes are more elastic than butyl and will find and bulge into any small void inside the tyre and rim. They can also stretch non-uniformly, resulting in a thin, leaky section that loses air even more rapidly than a sound latex tube.

Your failed bonded joint is unusual, but it's asking a lot of ordinary vulcanising solution to improve on the manufacturer's adhesive technology. Lightweight butyl tubes are more reliable. If you want something more exotic, Tubolito tubes (Cycle Aug/Sep 2019) may fit the bill.
Richard Hallett

Technical

Pedal stuck in crank

Q The right-hand pedal is stuck. I've damaged the bolt for the Allen key. You cannot loosen the pedal with

Health

Achilles healing?

Q I ruptured my Achilles tendon about a month ago and I've been wearing the VACOped boot for a week. Next hospital appointment is in three weeks and I've not yet had advice about exercises that might help the recovery. I've been doing upper body stuff with those resistance bands to help crutches use. Any advice would be very welcome. Or am I too soon?

Oilyhands, on the Cycling UK Forum

A With a ruptured Achilles tendon, patience is the watchword. Very few people get a surgical repair so most must wait for the tendon to heal. The first six weeks in a boot hold the foot in an extended (toes down) position to keep the tendon slack. As you get towards the end of boot wearing, the physio usually takes out the wedges that hold the foot extended and allow it to come back to a neutral position.

Clearly it is important to avoid sudden flexion of the ankle while it is healing so, along with mobilising exercises, using an exercise bike gently will be the first step in recovery. The physio will advise on when you can progress to road biking but it will be sudden dismounts that will threaten the tendon. For this reason mountain biking and off-road cycling pose more risk. Take it gently and you should be fully recovered by around six months.

Dr Kate Brodie

