

# How to Remove Lug Nuts and Tires

Whether you need to take off your car tire to change a flat, rotate it, or do some repairs, you'll need to remove the lug nuts first. It's important you remove the lug nuts and your tire safely so you don't get hurt. By taking a few...

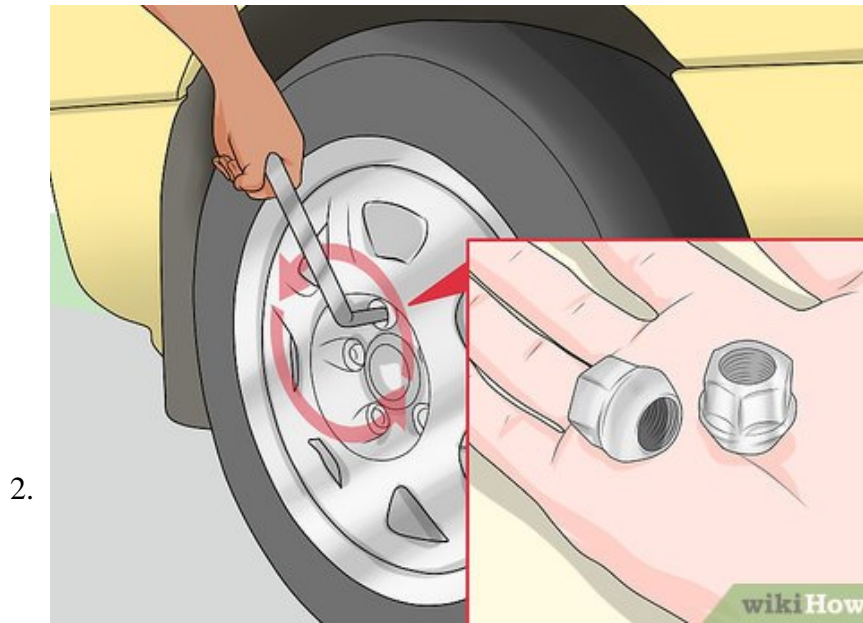
Method 1 of 3:

## Removing a Jacked Up Wheel



**Use the appropriate tool to loosen the lug nuts.** Before jacking the car up, use your wrench or tire iron to break the lug nuts loose. Do not remove them completely, but turn them a quarter turn or so in the counter-clockwise direction each to make them loose enough to unscrew while the vehicle is in the air.<sup>[1]</sup>

1. You can purchase tire irons from your local auto parts stores that usually have an end that fits all vehicles.
2. You may also choose to simply use a deep socket of the appropriate size with a ratchet or breaker bar.



**Remove the lug nuts.** Because the lug nuts are already loose from before you lifted the car, they should be fairly easy to unscrew the rest of the way. Use a wrench if need be to turn the lug nuts counter-clockwise until they come off of the lug studs.<sup>[2]</sup>

1. The wheel may shift as you remove the lug nuts, so watch your fingers for pinches.
2. Remove the lug nuts across from one another in a star pattern, rather than each one in a row.



**Apply liquid thread loosen it if need be.** If the lug nuts have rusted over, apply a generous amount of a thread loosener or rust remover to the nuts. Allow it to sit for a few minutes, then attempt to loosen the lug nut again.<sup>[3]</sup>

1. If the lug nut and stud break, you will need to have a new lug stud installed in order to repair the vehicle.
2. Be sure to use the correct sized socket. A socket that is slightly too large could round off the lug nut.
3. A stripped or rounded lug nut will have to be cut off by a professional.

4.



**Set the lug nuts aside someplace safe.** Place the lug nuts in a safe place to be sure you don't lose them. If you lose a lug nut, you may be able to secure the wheel temporarily with the remaining nuts, but if you lose more than one, it will not be safe to drive the vehicle until they have been replaced.<sup>[4]</sup>

1. You can purchase replacement lug nuts at your local auto parts store.
2. Store the lug nuts in a small bowl or container so they can't roll away as you work.

5.



**Pull the wheel toward you.** Once the lug nuts have been removed, place your hands on either side of the tire. Grip the back of the tire and pull it toward you to remove the wheel from the lug studs. If the wheel has not been removed in a long time, it may require quite a bit of force to pull the wheel off.<sup>[5]</sup>

1. Be careful, if the tire is damaged there may be metal wire sticking out of it that can cut you.
2. Wear gloves to pull on a damaged tire.

6.



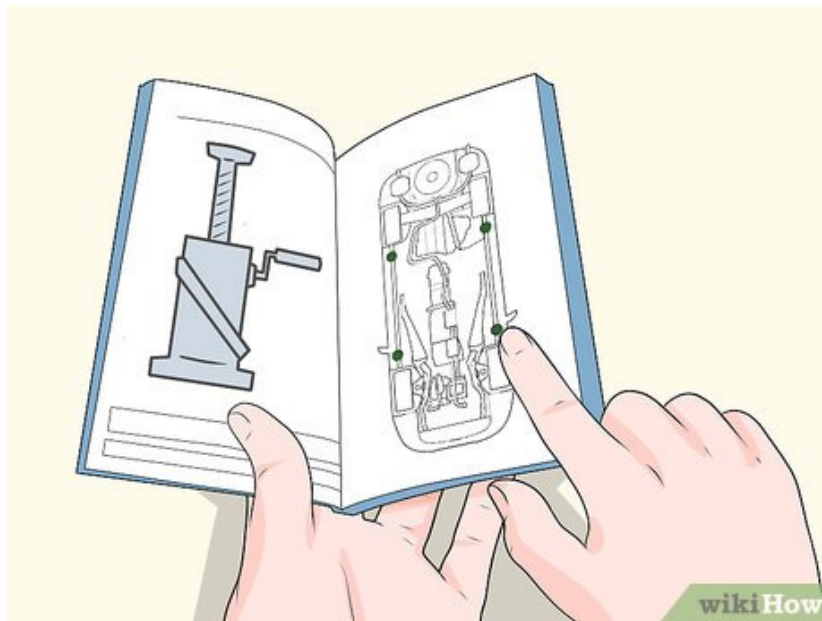
**Use a rubber mallet to loosen stuck on wheels.** If the wheel is seized in place and won't come off from you pulling on it, use a rubber mallet to bang it loose. Strike the tire where the rim and tire meet all along the circumference of the wheel until it breaks loose.<sup>[6]</sup>

1. Do not use a metal hammer to hit the rims or you may damage them.
2. It may take a good deal of force to remove the wheel if it is rusted in place.

Method 2 of 3:

## Jacking Up a Wheel

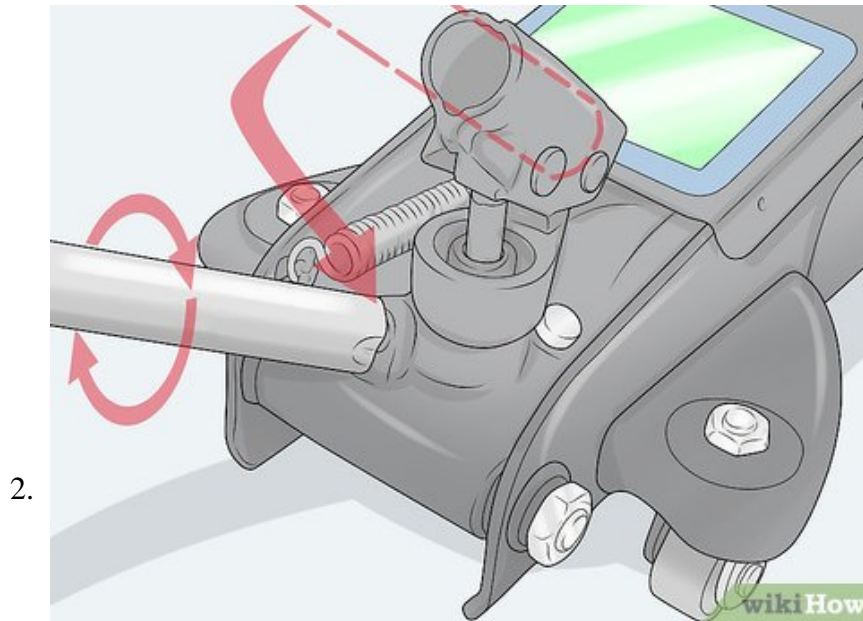
1.



**Locate the designated jack points for the vehicle.** Each vehicle has specific points on the frame that are designed to withstand the weight of jacking up the vehicle. These jack points are not always easily

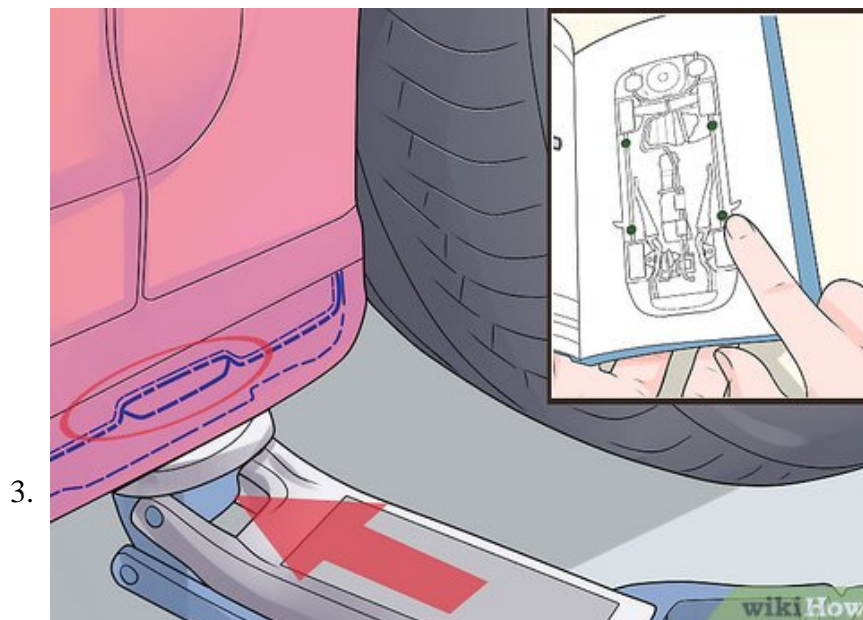
identified, so refer to your vehicle's owner's manual to help you find them if you are having difficulty.<sup>[7]</sup>

1. There are usually jack points on the frame of your car to the inside of each wheel, and at a center point on the front and back of the car.
2. Jacking the car up at a point that is not designed for it can cause damage to the frame of the vehicle.



**Close the valve on the jack.** Trolley jacks utilize hydraulics to lift your vehicle off of the ground. When the hydraulic valve is open, the jack can't create pressure on the piston to lift the car. Use the handle of the jack to turn the valve clockwise until it is completely closed. Re-insert the handle into the jack once done if you used the handle to close the valve.

1. Different jacks may place the valve in different places, but it is often a different color than the rest of the jack or is left unpainted completely.
2. If you are using a scissor jack, there is no valve you need to close.



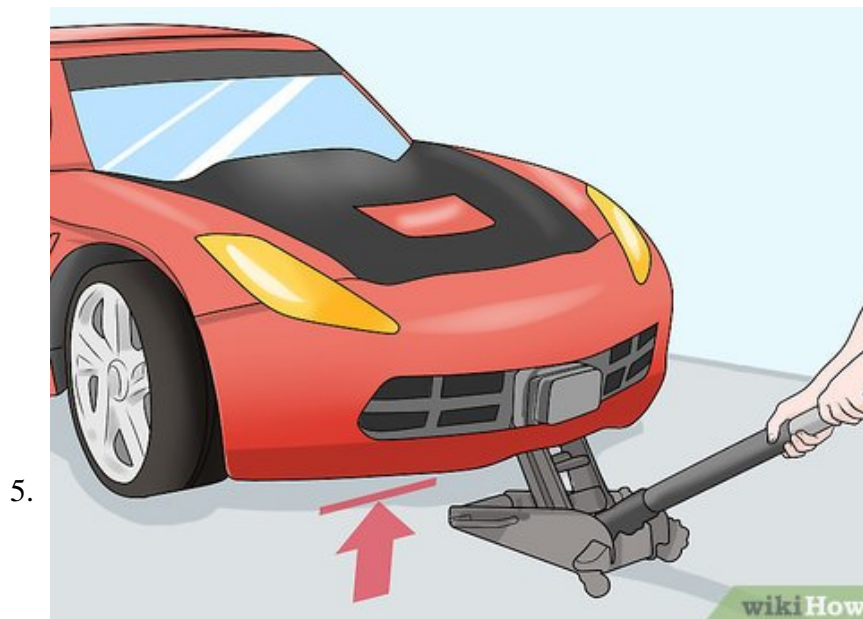
**Place the jack beneath the appropriate jack point.** Slide your jack beneath the jack point closest to the wheel you intend to remove so the cup of the jack is sitting just beneath the frame. You may need to raise the cup of the jack slightly by lifting the jack handle and pressing it back down or spinning it once to make sure the jack is positioned properly.

1. The cup on the jack should be centered on the designated jack point for the vehicle.
2. There are teeth or ridges on the cup of the jack to help prevent the car's frame from sliding as it's jacked up.



**Use the jack to lift the vehicle.** Depending on the type of jack you are using, you will need to either raise and lower the handle (on a trolley jack) or turn it (on a scissor jack) to raise the vehicle. Start slow, paying close attention to the frame around the jack point to look for signs of bending or crimping of the metal.

1. If you see signs that the metal is bending, lower the car and reposition the jack unto the jack point properly.

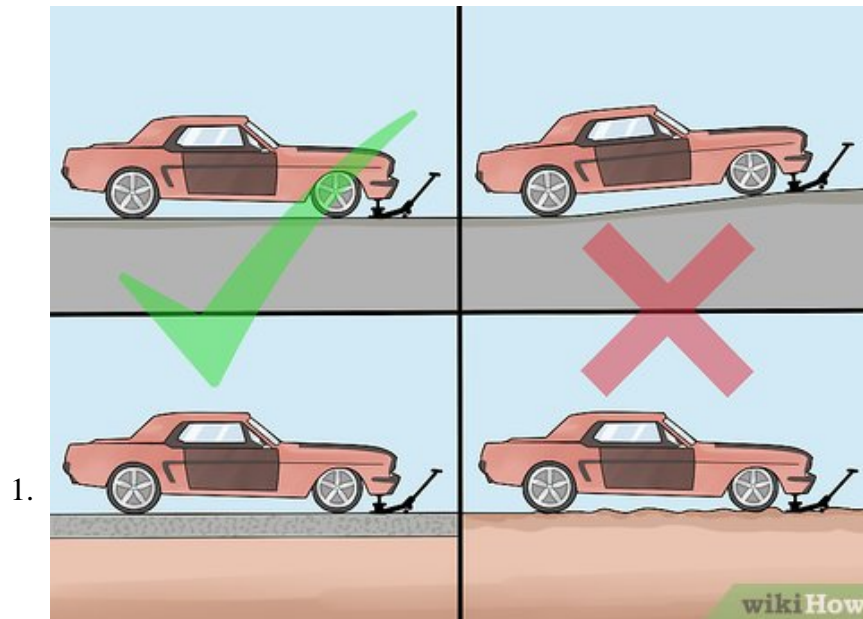


**Only jack the car up as high as necessary.** Raising a vehicle up too high can increase the danger of it falling off of the jack or jack stands. Once it is high enough to change the tire, place jack stands beneath it for safety.

1. Do not place any part of your body under the vehicle unless you have jack stands in place to support it.
2. You only need to lift the vehicle up until the tire is no longer touching the ground to remove it.

Method 3 of 3:

## Preparing to Use the Jack



**Find a firm, even area to jack up the car.** As you jack up a portion of the car to remove the wheel, the weight of that portion will be centered on the relatively small space beneath the jack. As a result, it is essential that you jack your car up in an area that can support the pressure. Concrete and blacktop are the best options for jacking up the car. It is extremely unsafe to jack a vehicle up on an angle, so it is also very important that you choose a level surface.<sup>[8]</sup>

1. Never jack up a vehicle on slanted or uneven surfaces.
2. Jacking a car up on a surface that isn't strong enough can cause the jack to topple over or sink.

2.



**Ensure you have space to work safely.** Whether you're using an emergency jack or a trolley jack, it's important to ensure you have enough room to work without putting yourself or others at risk. Make sure you have at least enough room to stand with an outstretched arm toward the jack without coming into contact with a wall or being in the street if you are replacing a flat tire.<sup>[9]</sup>

1. Make sure there's enough room to sit behind your jack without being in the lane of the road.

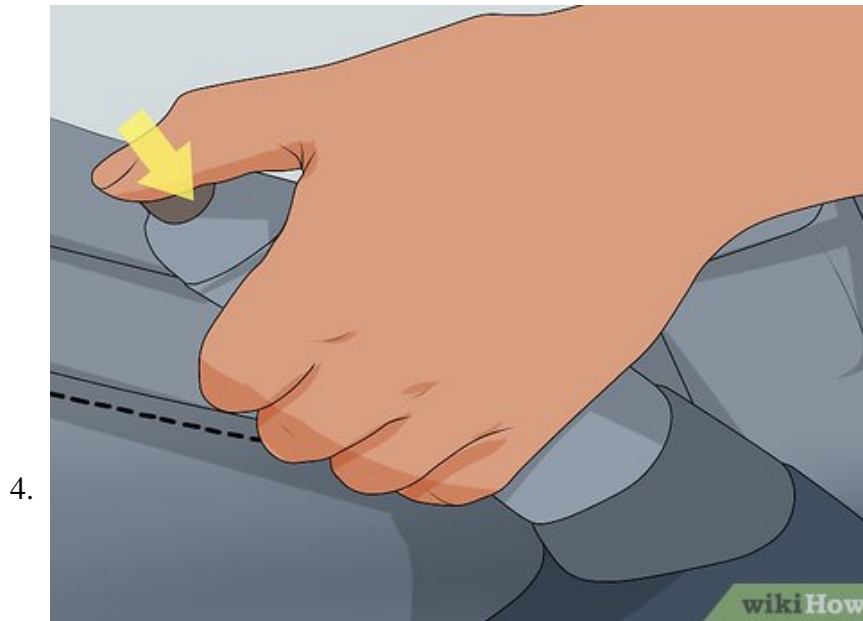
3.



**Make sure the car is in park.** If your car is equipped with an automatic transmission, it should be in park before you jack it up. Putting your car in park prevents the wheels from turning and will keep the vehicle from rolling off of the jack. Remember, however, your car may still shift when in park, so it's important to utilize wheel chocks in conjunction with placing the vehicle in park.<sup>[10]</sup>

1. Remember that putting the car in park will lock its drive wheels in place, so a front wheel drive car's front wheels won't turn in park, and vice versa for a rear wheel drive vehicle.

2. If your car is equipped with a manual transmission, try putting the car in first gear to prevent it from rolling.
3. You can place rocks or plastic wheel chocks purchased from an auto parts store behind the wheels to ensure they can't turn while you lift the vehicle.



**Engage the parking brake.** Depending on the make and model of the vehicle, the parking brake may be a handle in the center console or a pedal on your left side when sitting in the driver's seat. Pull up on the handle or press down on the pedal to engage the parking brake and prevent your vehicle from rolling while it's being jacked up.<sup>[11]</sup>

1. Your owner's manual can help you locate your parking brake if you are unsure.
2. The parking brake locks the rear wheels in place, so it will not help if the entire back end of the car is in the air.

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