

[atc] Alignment Service Page Content

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Tips for avoiding unnecessary alignment issues:

- **Keep your tires properly inflated.** They and your car were designed to work together perfectly. When they are over or under inflated, it affects everything else. Check your owner's manual for the exact pressure.
- **Don't lower tire pressure in bad weather.** The common thinking is that it will give you better traction in snow and ice, but the treads of your tire will actually squeeze together and won't grip nearly as well.
- **Drive conservatively.** Hard braking, aggressive driving, and fast turns are a sure way to put strain on your steering components and mess up your car's alignment. Take it easy (unless you have sponsors and your last name is Gordon, Petty, or Earnhardt).
- **Leave your stuff at home.** Believe it or not, using your trunk to haul all of your earthly possessions can actually cost you good money. The extra weight in the back changes the height of your car and can throw off your alignment.
- **Get on a schedule.** It's easy to forget about your car's alignment until it's obvious something is wrong. Having it checked regularly (every other oil change is a good rule of thumb) can help you avoid costly repairs down the road.

How does an alignment work?

A car wheel alignment is simple but not easy. It is nothing more than adjusting all four wheels to be parallel to each other and standing up straight so they roll perfectly flat on the road. This assures a smooth, straight ride. However, achieving that without sophisticated equipment is like trying to pat your head and rub your tummy at the same time – while juggling eggs and drinking water upside-down. Most mechanics use a computer connected to clamps equipped with finely calibrated cameras to take the guesswork out of getting things perfectly in line.

There are 3 different angles that are squared up during a typical alignment: **toe**, **camber**, and **caster**.

- **Toe:** the angle at which the front edge of the two tires are either pointed in or pointed out (Think "pigeon-toed" or "duck-footed.")
- **Camber:** the angle at which wheels lean in or out (Think "knock-kneed" or "bow-legged.")

- **Caster:** the angle at which the tire pivots to aid in steering (Picture the front wheels – the “casters” – on a shopping cart. Their pivot point is just in front of the wheel as you’re rolling forward. It’s kind of like that.

Most modern cars won’t need **camber** and **caster** adjustments unless they are seriously damaged. However, the **toe** angle *will* need re-aligning after a while even under ordinary driving conditions. (Thank you, potholes.)

Why should I get alignment checked?

1. You will be buying a lot of tires if you don’t.
2. You will be buying a lot more gas if you don’t.

More than anything else, proper alignment keeps your tires from wearing down unevenly. Uneven tires makes your car harder to handle and not nearly as efficient. You’ll also be putting a lot more stress on important steering and suspension components, and those aren’t fun to have to repair.

New tires are *way* more expensive than a good alignment. Save money over the life of your vehicle and have your alignment checked regularly.

How do I know if I need my alignment serviced?

- Your car drifts to one side of the road or the other
- Your tires are wearing out too quickly
- Your tires are more worn on one side than the other
- Your steering wheel is crooked when it should be straight
- Your tires are squealing

As if that wasn’t enough, it *is* possible for your wheels to be out of alignment and you never even notice! That’s why having your alignment checked regularly is a good idea.

What do we do in a typical alignment service?

When you bring your car to have its wheel alignment checked, one of our technicians will connect each wheel to clamps that have special cameras and sensors attached. The computer will be able to “see” each wheel’s orientation and relationship to the other wheels and make precision adjustments.

During a typical alignment we:

1. Start and end with a test drive.
2. Check steering and suspension components for any possible damage.
3. Inspect tread wear patterns on your tires.
4. Make sure your tires are inflated properly.

5. Make sure your steering wheel is centered.

Georgia has a lot of roads (mostly around Atlanta!) that may or may not be in the best condition. A few well-placed potholes could ruin your ride. And those curbs you keep hitting aren't helping either. Let us help get you straightened back out!

Click here <link> to set up an appointment. Or call one of our locations today:

Augusta - (706) 738-7812

Grovetown – (706) 303-3333