

Brakes: You have questions - we have answers.

Do I need new rotors every time I get a brake job?

NO. We use manufactures specifications to determine whether or not you need new rotors. They tell us what nominal (average new thickness), machine to (not to be resurfaced past this), and discard points are. We charge \$15.00 per rotor to resurface each rotor. On average we machine .020 (that's twenty thousandths) to true up a rotor that's not severely warped. Because of competition in the market place the price of new rotors has been driven way down. They average \$25 - \$55 each. If you are spending \$15 on each rotor to have them machined sometimes it's smarter to buy new ones.

My vehicle only has 25000 miles on it. We've never had a brake job, but you're telling me I need new rotors. How can that be?

Some manufacturers have not built there rotors thick enough to be machined even once. The specifications mandate that you replace the rotors on every brake job.

What causes brakes to squeak?

It can be a number of things. Most common is the wear indicator is contacting the rotor. This is a small metal tab that is designed to warn you with an audible squeak that your pads are worn out. You need to replace them right away to avoid grinding into the rotor or ruining the caliper. Another common cause is a small chunk of metal has become lodged between the pad and rotor. Some less expensive semi metallic pads have larger chunks of metal in the friction material. When the pad wears down to that chunk of metal and starts squeaking the only way to remedy the problem is to redo the whole brake job. Most suppliers will warranty the pads but as a reputable repair shop we are forced to eat the labor on doing the whole job again. You can understand why we would rather sell you a premium pad.

My vehicle pulls only while braking. What causes this?

The problem can be caused by a number of things. Most common is a caliper that is not functioning properly. Another cause is a frozen slider or a restricted brake hose. This can also be caused by a worn suspension component such as a control arm bushing. When this is the case, as you apply the brakes your wheel alignment is thrown off.

Why do I have to replace both calipers if only one is bad?

Calipers should always be replaced in pairs even if only one is acting up. Most of the time if only one caliper is replaced the new caliper works better than the other so the vehicle will pull to that side when braking.

If my rotors are still thick why do I have to replace them?

Sometimes rotors will rust badly and leave small craters that can't be machined out. Another problem is heat check marks this can't be corrected by machining. If the rotor is severely warped it would require too much machining to be usable. If the cooling fins between the braking surfaces are severely rusted they should be replaced.

What kind of life or mileage should I expect from my new brake pads?

That depends on your driving habits, the type of driving you do, the size of the vehicle and the quality of the friction material used. Generally your brakes should last between 25000 and 50000 miles. You should have your tires rotated and your brakes inspected at least every 10000 miles.

Why do I need to flush my brake fluid?

It is a good idea to flush your brake fluid every other year or at least every 50000 miles. Brake fluid absorbs moisture. Even though it lives in a sealed system there is always air above the fluid level in the master cylinder. This is just one source for moisture absorption. Over time after many stops brake fluid can boil inside the caliper. This changes the consistency of the fluid and will make it dark in color.

I heard an add on the radio where brand -X will install lifetime warranty pads on my car for only \$69.95 per axle. How can they do it so cheap?

Be careful. This is generally a "get you in the door" type of advertising tactic. Truth be known they can't do it that cheap. Their average ticket per vehicle is close to \$650. Most of the time they will tell you that you need calipers, rotors and hoses. This may not be true but in order to give you their lifetime warranty they will up sell leverage you into buying everything. Here at John's Auto Repair we are only interested in selling you what you need. Our motto is "Quality work at a fair price." We stand behind that slogan and pride ourselves on giving you the best service we can. Another thing to be aware of is their warranty may only be against manufacture's defect. Not against normal wear. Most times this does not cover labor.

I just had my brakes done three months ago but now my steering wheel shakes and I can feel a pulsation in my brake pedal. Is this covered under warranty?

We offer a 12 month or 12000 mile warranty whichever comes first. This covers all parts against manufactures defects, and labor to the extent that your job will be performed by an ASE certified technician to factory specifications. It will be covered against pulsation when you leave the shop. Because of driving habits and other unforeseen circumstances we can not warranty your rotors against warpage. However we here at John's Auto Repair always go the extra mile to make sure you are satisfied. We will extend to you one time resurfacing of your rotors at no charge providing there is enough material on the rotor to keep you above manufactures minimum machining. This offer is limited to a

maximum of two hours labor. If we have installed premium rotors we can get these covered under warranty by our parts distributor.

My brake light just came on. What causes this and what should I do?

The most common cause of this is a sensor in the master cylinder has detected low fluid level. This can be caused by pad wear or a leak in the hydraulic system. Another cause may be the parking brake has been slightly engaged. Yet another common cause is the third brake light is burnt out. Some vehicles are equipped with a system that will notify you about this bulb. Whatever the problem is you should get to a qualified service facility as soon as possible. You may even want to have it towed. This light should be considered a warning to brake failure. If you are going to drive it in, be very careful, and be prepared to use your emergency brake in case of hydraulic system failure.

*** There are many more questions to be answered. We've covered some of the more common ones. Here is a list of more. If any of these apply to you please give us a call or stop by. We'll be glad to take the time to explain everything and answer all your questions. We even have samples of different brake pads and rotors to show you the differences in manufactures quality.

I know I need brakes. What are my options?

My rear brakes grab and lock up when it's wet. What causes this?

My brake pedal fades to the floor at stops. What could be wrong?

My brake pedal is rock hard and the vehicle doesn't stop well. What could it be?

Are there different kinds of brake fluid and which should I use?

What are the different types of materials used in construction of brake pads and can you tell me which is best for my application?

Is there really a difference in new brake rotors and can I get away with using inexpensive ones?

Can you please tell me a little about the major companies that manufacture brake pads?

What specifically makes one brake pad better than another?

Why don't after market companies have wear indicators on leading and trailing edges of brake pads like OEM?

What specifically makes a good brake job?

Do I really need to have my rear brakes cleaned and adjusted or is it a waste of money?