

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Biography	5	Brake Force and Corner Weight	37
Acknowledgments	5	Perfect Balance	38
Dedication	6	Static Weight Distribution	39
Foreword	6	The Second Law of Motion	39
Introduction	7	Dynamic Weight Distribution	40
Chapter 1: Energy Conversion	9	The Benefits of Perfect Balance	41
The Conservation of Energy	9	Front Brake Bias	43
Where Energy Comes From	10	Rear Brake Bias	43
Friction	10	Measuring Brake Balance	44
Kinetic Energy	11	Changing Brake Balance	44
Potential Energy	13	Chapter 5: Pedals, Boosters	
Energy Transformation	14	and Master Cylinders	46
Energy and the Brake System	14	Brake Pedal Components	46
Calculating Brake System Temperature	15	OEM Brake Pedals	47
Importance of Brake Sizing	15	Racing Brake Pedals	48
Chapter 2: Tires Stop the Car	18	Brake Boosters	48
The First Law of Motion	18	Vacuum Boosters	48
Brake Forces	18	Hydraulic Boosters	50
Tire Slip	19	Master Cylinders	50
How Brake Forces are Generated	20	Master Cylinder Selection	52
The Mu-Slip Curve	22	Rear Brake Pressure Reduction	54
Choosing the Best Tires	24	Balance Bars	54
Calculating Maximum Deceleration	25	Proportioning Valves	55
Chapter 3: Brake System Design	27	Chapter 6: Brake Fluid	58
Driver Applied Force	27	Brake Fluid 101	58
Brake System Overview	28	FMVSS116	58
Brake Corner Gain	33	Dry Boiling Point	60
Summing Forces	34	Wet Boiling Point	61
Overall Brake System Gain	34	Water Adsorption	61
Calculating Deceleration	34	DOT Ratings	61
Calculating Stopping Distance	34	Brake Fluid Compatibility	64
Brake System Modifications	35	Brake Fluid Maintenance	64
Chapter 4: Brake Balance	37	Brake Bleeding	65
		Chapter 7: Brake Lines and Hoses	69

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Hydraulic Circuit Design	69		
Brake Lines	70		
Flare Fittings	70		
Brake Hoses	71		
Banjo Fittings	72		
Stainless Steel Brake Hoses	73		
Chapter 8: Brake Calipers	76	Chapter 11: Sports Car Brake Upgrade	118
Hydraulic Gain	76	The Vehicle	119
Caliper Components	76	The Objective	119
Taper Wear	79	Picking the Right Parts	119
Piston Count	81	Bolting Them On	121
Caliper Mounting	82	The Results	124
One-Piece (Monoblock) Calipers	84		
Two-Piece Calipers	84	Chapter 12: Racecar Brake Upgrade	126
Knockback	84	The Vehicle	127
		The Objective	127
Chapter 9: Brake Pads	88	Front Brake Upgrade	127
Brake Pad Terminology	88	Rear Brake Upgrade	129
Coefficient of Friction	90	Apply System Upgrade	131
Coefficient of Friction Stability	91	Hoses, Fluids, and Pads	132
Brake Pad Fade	91	The Results	132
Friction Material Categories	92		
Friction Material Chemistries	93	Chapter 13: Muscle Car Brake Upgrade	133
Friction Mechanisms	96	The Vehicle	133
Brake System Break-In	97	The Objective	134
		Drum Brakes 101	134
Chapter 10: Brake Rotors	100	Picking The Right Parts	134
A Rotor Refresher	100	Bolting Them On	135
Rotor Terminology	101	Buttoning it Up	138
Effective Radius	103	The Results	138
Rotor Sizing	103		
Static Weight and Rotational Inertia	103	Chapter 14: Hot Rod Brake Upgrade	139
Rotor Cooling	104	The Vehicle	139
One-Piece (Fixed) Rotors	107	The Objective	139
Two-Piece (Floating) Rotors	107	Front Brake Upgrade	139
Solid Rotors	109	Brake Pedal Considerations	140
Vented Rotors	110	Master Cylinder Upgrade	142
Cross-Drilled Rotors	111	Brake Line and Proportioning	
Slotted Rotors	112	Valve Installation	142
Rotor Inspection	113	Brake Hoses	143
Thickness Variation	115	Brake Fluid Selection	143
		Parking Brake Installation	144
		The Results	144



TIRES STOP THE CAR

As you just learned in Chapter 1, brakes do not stop the car—they simply convert energy from one form into another. The responsibility of stopping the car falls solely on the tires, or more specifically the tire-to-road interface. Only these four palm-sized patches of rubber that are in contact with the road below (the contact patches) govern how quickly a car will stop.

Of course, a poorly designed or malfunctioning brake system can certainly *prevent* a vehicle from achieving its maximum deceleration rate, but the best stop-

ping performance each and every time is dictated by the tire-to-road interface. A few simple equations are used later in this chapter to illustrate this point, but for the next few pages sit back and hang tight. It's now time to talk about another law.

The First Law of Motion

You may recognize Sir Isaac Newton as the guy who allegedly defined the concept of gravity when an apple fell on his head one afternoon. However, for a few paragraphs you should look past that rather major accomplishment and focus on the first of his three stated Laws of Motion.

(Note that Newton's First Law of Motion is not to be confused with the First Law of Thermodynamics from Chapter 1. Apparently, every physicist wants to be known for discovering the first law of something or other.)

Paraphrasing Newton with a reasonable degree of accuracy, the First Law of

Motion states that an object at rest will stay at rest unless it is acted upon by an external force. Conversely, it also states that an object in motion will stay in motion unless it too is acted upon by an external force. In other words, things sitting still will just sit still until you push them and things that are moving continue to move until you do something to stop them.

Brake Forces

Applying Newton's First Law of Motion to vehicle brake systems is relatively straightforward. It goes something like this: Once in motion, a vehicle essentially will not slow down or stop unless it is acted upon by an external force, or what can now be called a *brake force*.

So where do these brake forces come from? Essentially, they result from any mechanism that absorbs a vehicle's kinetic energy (they are one and the same). Consequently, this merits a brief revisit of



The brakes don't stop the car—that's the tires' job! For this reason, tires come in a wide variety of shapes, sizes, and designs to optimize the available brake force. The lack of a tread pattern on this tire makes it a poor choice for wet-weather performance, but a great choice for racing when the track is dry. (Hoosier Racing Tire)



Brake forces can come from a variety of sources other than the brake system. For example, if a mischievous co-driver were to force a car traveling at highway speeds into first gear, the resulting driveline friction forces would be transmitted immediately back to the driven wheels. Not that we speak from experience here...

energy transformation factors from Chapter 1, now adding in the resulting brake force contributions for each mechanism:

1. *Rolling resistance brake forces* result from the body and tread of the tire resisting deformation at the contact patch. As the tire flattens out against the road, a force is generated that resists the motion of the vehicle.

2. *Axle, differential, bearing, and engine brake forces* result from rotating and reciprocating friction. As these components mesh and rub together, they resist any motion between themselves, which is then mechanically transferred to the tire-to-road interface.

3. *Aerodynamic brake forces* result from the vehicle simply traveling through the air. As the vehicle attempts to push the air out of its path, the air molecules react by resisting the motion. In other words, the air is not happy with the situation and it pushes back (the sensation you get from holding your hand out of the car window).

4. *Mechanical deformation brake forces* result from running the vehicle into a fixed object. Again, this is a highly undesirable, yet highly effective, way of stopping a vehicle. Turn 3 at Martinsville pushes back pretty hard, as do trees and telephone poles.

So, while it is nice to be aware of these secondary brake force mechanisms, the whole point of this book is to understand the contribution of the brake system components. Consequently, the rest of this chapter leaves these factors behind and focuses on brake forces occurring at the tire-to-road interface as a result of brake system operation.

Tire Slip

Tire slip, or simply slip, is the single most important concept in understanding any aspect of vehicle performance (at least in my humble opinion). Without slip, vehicles could neither accelerate, nor decelerate, nor turn, as a tire can only generate force when it is slipping. As you'll learn in a few moments, a tire that is not slipping is free rolling, or coasting, and a free-rolling tire does not generate any force at all (except for the small amount of brake force due to its internal rolling resistance).

Before going any further, let's clarify one important point: A tire does not need

to be spinning wildly or skidding out of control to be slipping. Although these conditions are a result of a significant amount of slip, there are many other times where a slipping tire does not actually *look* like it's slipping at all. Yet for all practical purposes, any time your vehicle is in motion, its tires are slipping, even though you can't see it with the naked eye.

Applying this concept to brake system performance is relatively straightforward. In order for a tire to generate a brake force,

it must be slipping relative to the road surface in the direction of travel (normally to a very small level, but it is slipping nonetheless). If a tire is not slipping, it is not generating any brake force (again, ignoring the brake force due to its internal rolling resistance).

Although that may sound odd, it makes more sense by taking a moment to formally define slip. Tire slip can be quantified mathematically by the following equation:

Tire Slip Calculations

The data in the table below illustrates how much tire slip would be present for given combinations of tire speed and vehicle speed.

	Tire speed	Vehicle speed	Tire slip
Condition 1	50 mph	50 mph	0%
Condition 2	45 mph	50 mph	10%
Condition 3	0 mph	50 mph	100%

So, what do these numbers mean? Well, a few observations can quickly be made:

1. Condition 1 indicates that when the tire speed (50 mph) is the same as the vehicle speed (50 mph), there is zero slip present. Because this is a free-rolling condition, there is no brake force present between the tire and the road. The vehicle will be coasting.

2. Condition 2 indicates that when the tire slows down (45 mph) relative to the vehicle (50 mph), the slip level increases (10 percent in this case). This is the slip range where most normal braking occurs.

3. Condition 3 represents a tire that has stopped spinning (0 mph) although the vehicle continues to speed along (50 mph), resulting in 100-percent slip. This is the classic "brakes locked up" situation, which is usually accompanied by screeching sounds and billowing tire smoke. Note that this condition is also commonly referred to as sliding or skidding and is generally an undesirable way to slow down a vehicle.



100 percent tire slip, also known as wheel lock, occurs if a vehicle is still moving yet the tire is no longer rotating. This may be amusing for the spectators, but it's not the most effective way to achieve the best possible stopping distance. (Wayne Flynn/pdxsports.com)