Six Tips for Avoiding Pesky Pothole Damage While Driving

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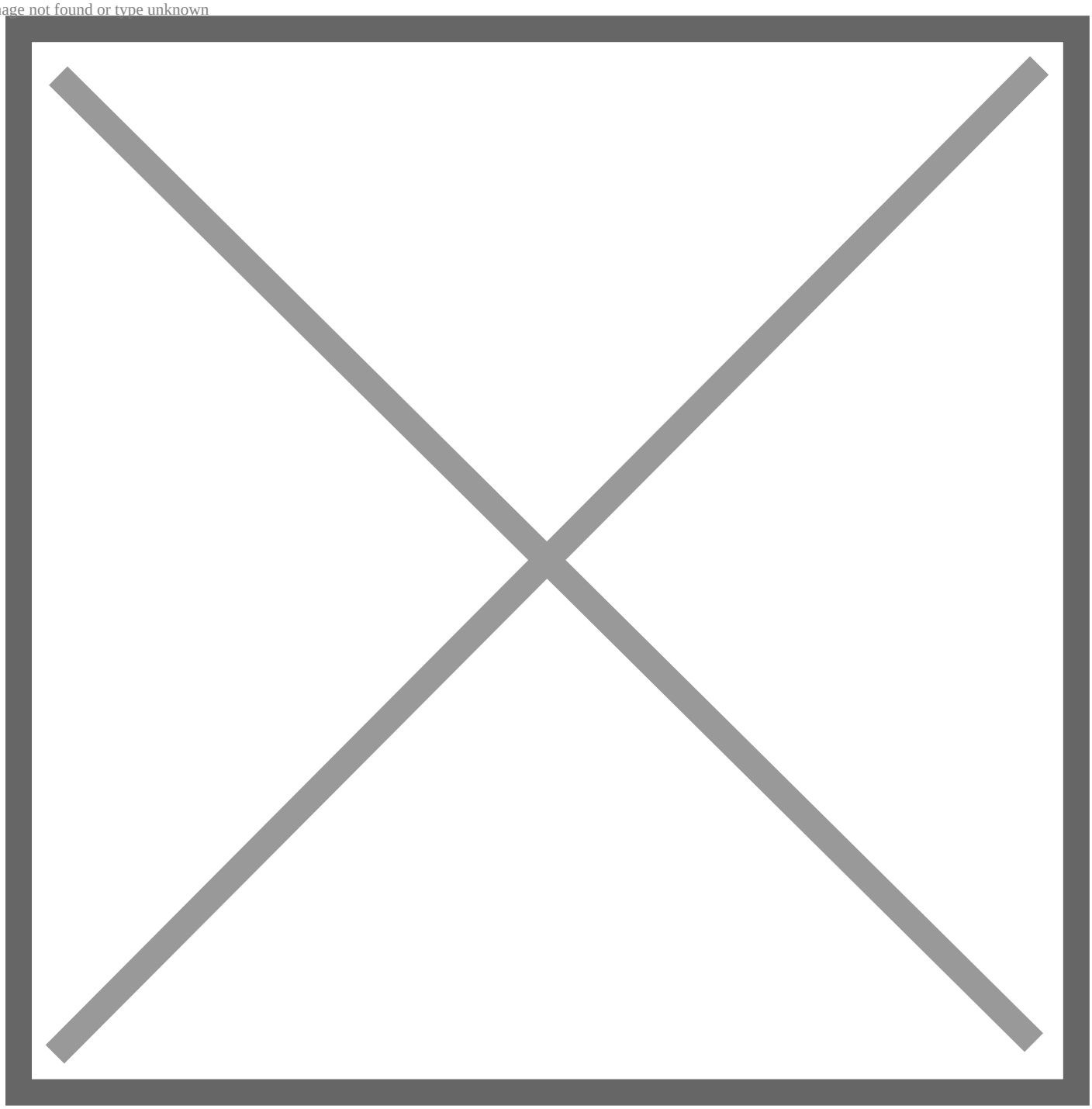

Spring has sprung, and so have the annoying potholes wet winter weather left behind on some of your most frequented roads. And unfortunately, these divots in the asphalt can wreak havoc on your vehicle.

While they might not seem like a huge issue, potholes can cause costly damage to tires, suspensions and other vehicle parts. A report from AAA indicates that drivers in the U.S. spend an average of $3 billion on pothole damage repairs each year.

Luckily, there are several smart moves drivers can make to help minimize and hopefully steer clear of the damage that these rocky pavement pits might cause. Check out the roadmap below on how to avoid pothole pitfalls driving forward:

Don’t drive through puddles

When it comes to puddles, be cautious. Don’t drive a vehicle too fast through them since there may be hidden potholes that are deep and extra dangerous. If the vehicle does collide with a deep crater, don’t panic. Pull over to a safe spot on the highway or shoulder of the road right away. Slow down, check for cross traffic, change lanes and come to a stop to check for damage.

Stay alert on unfamiliar roads

When driving on an unfamiliar road, watch out for hazards. Because drivers often anticipate and avoid potholes in areas they travel often, they might not notice new ones in less frequented areas. Drivers should keep their eyes peeled in new places and proceed with caution.

Keep a safe distance between vehicles

Maintain a safe distance between vehicles on the road. Drivers will be able to spot potholes faster and more easily when they can see what’s coming. Make it a point to maintain at least a 3-second following distance between the vehicle in front of you. And remember, allow for extra space on highways and byways because it’s possible to miss a pothole when following too closely at faster speeds.

Keep up on car maintenance

If the vehicle’s tires are inflated properly when it hits a pothole, it lessens the chance of damage. When a vehicle hits a pothole with low tire pressure, the rim is more likely to be damaged and the suspension could suffer. Underinflated tires may also increase the chances of losing control of your vehicle or getting a blowout. Overinflated tires will not give as much during impact with a pothole, which could also damage the suspension. Shocks and struts in good condition, with properly inflated tires can cushion the blow.

Drive slower in the dark

Less visibility during nighttime means it can be tougher to avoid potholes. Reduce the chances of driving over them and minimize damage by taking it slow on the roads. This defensive driving tactic is especially helpful when it’s rainy or excessively windy.

Know how to hit an unavoidable pothole

Some potholes just can’t be avoided. One of the best things to do is slow down to avoid incurring vehicle damage. When the car hits a pothole, grip the steering wheel tightly to prevent it from jerking. Just don’t brake before hitting a pothole because doing so can cause damage.