Checking Lugnuts

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I wanted to remind everyone to check wheels and lug nuts this cruising season. On a past cruise, one of my friends almost lost a wheel off his car when the wheel lugs loosened. Fortunately, the problem was noticed in time and corrected. Having been involved in a similar incident in the past on one of our cars, I learned an important lesson to share.

For most older cars, the factory lug wrench is great to have in the trunk for showing the car, but in my opinion it's use is otherwise questionable versus a good socket wrench.

As for the original jack for older cars, I prefer a small scissors jack, which can be paces under the suspension to lift the wheel and tire just far enough to get the tire off the ground to change, without lifting the whole car by the bumper. These are inexpensive and are definitely worthwhile to have in the trunk at all times (other than concourse shows).

Like other major components on your car, there are torque specifications for the wheel lugs with stock

wheels. Torque specs should be checked in your car's service manual, but are typically 70 to 80 foot-pounds for steel wheels. Aluminum or mag wheels usually are more in the range of 90 to 100 foot-pounds (check with your dealer or the wheel manufacturer).

To make sure that the lugs are on tight and evenly tightened takes a torque wrench. Use a torque wrench and tighten each lug to specifications, using an alternating pattern across the wheel, so one side is not tighter than the other.

When you install wheels, tighten them to specifications, then recheck and retorque after about 50 miles. This is mandatory for aluminum or mag wheels and highly recommended for any wheel.

Take a few minutes to give those lugs a check. We want to stay on the road, not "hit" the road!

One more thought...while you are in the trunk, check the air in the spare tire.