

HOW TO



You can't just ask your car to hop up on the bathroom scale, but there is an easy way to calculate the weight of your car by using little more than a tire gauge, tape measure and a couple of straight edges.

Weigh Your Car At Home



The tools for this simple weighing project are minimal, requiring only two pieces of cardboard with straight edges, a tape measure and a tire pressure gauge that measures in pounds per square inch (psi).

Knowing the weight of your car is not only a good thing to know, but it can come in handy when trying to determine placement of gear such as batteries to maintain good weight distribution. It can also give you an idea of why your big-block can't seem to get your pig off the line as quickly as you had hoped for when you originally built the thing...indicating a diet may be in order.

As you know, weight distribution affects the handling of all vehicles, so doing it correctly is important.

Measuring the weight of your car can be done in several ways, but few allow it to be accomplished at home, easily and inexpensively. You could take your car to a certified public scale, if you don't mind driving your beauty into typically seedy parts of town where semis zoom past with little regard for little red sportscars. You could buy a set of wheel scales like racers use, but that seems excessive given the number of times you will likely need to weigh your car.

Or you can try the method we just learned about. We have to warn you, there's math involved, so for those of you who flunked bonehead arithmetic, maybe you should search out the local truck scale, maybe at the gravel pit, and take your chances.

Someone passed this method along to us and we thought it made a lot of sense and worthy of passing along to Cobra Guide readers. It could be particularly helpful for those of us builders who want to weigh the project several times during the build process.

First you need to push the pieces of cardboard snug against the tire, as shown, making sure that they are parallel. What you will be measuring here is the contact patch of the tire.



With the cardboard pieces parallel, measure the fore-and-aft dimension then the side-to-side dimension. When you multiply those two measurements you have the surface area of the contact patch in square inches.



Using the tire pressure gauge that measures pounds per square inch (psi), measure the pressure of the tire. Then multiply the contact patch number derived above by the psi and the result is the amount of weight that the tire is supporting. Repeat the steps above for every tire and add all the results to determine the weight of your car. Air pressure is measured by how much weight it can hold up. In fact, if you look on the sidewall of your tires, there will be a maximum weight rating for the tire.



All you really need is a couple of pieces of cardboard with straight edges, a tape measure and a good tire gauge. What you will be doing is measuring the contact patch of the tire then measuring the air pressure in pounds per square inch. By converting the tire patch to square inches (multiply the two measurements) you can then multiply the air pressure by the contact patch area and get the amount of weight that each tire is supporting. You do that to each of the four tires of your car, add them together and you have the weight of the vehicle. If you're a metric citizen you can accomplish the same thing by using a metric tape measure and tire gauge. Don't mix and match as the results will probably be something like Klingon weight. CG