

# The cold, hard truth about winter tires

There is a common perception that winter tires are only necessary for people living in snow-clad, mountainous regions. Others think that winter tires wear out more quickly than all-season tires because they are more expensive. Both of these are misconceptions.

Michelin-certified Alliance Tire Professionals dealers have dispelled these myths and more below to help you and your family stay safe on the roads this winter season.

**MYTH:** All-season tires deliver the same performance on ice and snow as winter tires

**FACT:** Winter tires are designed specifically to provide more control and traction over ice and snow. Most people believe that all-season tires can deliver the same performance, however, this is false. In fact, winter tires deliver as much as 25 to 50 per cent more traction than all-season tires, which can very well

be the margin you need to stop in time or to turn to avoid trouble.

Winter tires are designed with a special compound that allows for more flexibility for better grip and stays soft even in the coldest of temperatures. Winter tire technology is specifically designed to expel water and dig down through snow to the road surface, maximizing your ability to start, turn and stop. The softer rubber compound of winter tires can perform in temperatures as cold as -40 degrees Celsius before hardening, whereas all-season tires can begin to harden at temperatures of -7 degrees Celsius.



**MYTH:** There is no real difference between the tread design on a winter tire and an all-season tire— they are basically the same

**FACT:** The wider and patterned grooves of winter tires allow for better traction and efficient channels to drain water and push out snow, while the common zigzag shape of

the grooves allow for more snow to be packed into the tire and then eject as the tire rotates for deeper snow traction. The sipes (small cuts in the tread block) also help cut through the water and slush, providing better traction. Conversely, all-season tires have flatter tread designs

that may provide a smoother highway ride, but fail to force out snow as effectively as winter tires. Additionally, all-season tires use sipe technology significantly less, resulting in less traction than winter tires.

**MYTH:** Winter tires are more expensive and don't last as long as all-season tires

**FACT:** A lot of people believe that winter tires are too expensive, but by rotating between your summer tires and winter tires you are prolonging the life of both sets— every kilometre traveled on your winter tires is saved on your summer tires and vice versa!

Remember: Four winter tires are recommended to achieve maximum traction and control over ice and snow. Ensure you're well equipped this winter and enjoy safe travels all season long.

—News Canada

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