

Tire Patch Kit Show-down!

We've traveled about 25,000 flatless miles this season. Normally this would be a really good thing but the lack of holes in our tires made it pretty hard for us to put two very different tire patch kits to the test. This week we lost patience and headed down to Burnaby Kawasaki where, with the help of some sharp objects, a drill and some knives we spent the afternoon turning a 190 rear into Bikeland pincushion to find out what works and what doesn't.

We compared two kits: The first is the new PowerSport Smart Spair patch and inflator kit from the tire repair guys at "Slime". The Slime kit comes with an extremely compact high-pressure 12 V pump and a single shot of a new type of Slime, specifically designed for Sportbikes. (It has little black chunky things floating around in it).

The second kit is from "Stop & Go"; a small family run company with a cool product. The Stop & Go kit incorporates a very cool glueless mushroom type plug that you insert into your punctured tire using a special (for the lack of better description) oversized machined syringe. It doesn't need any glue or vulcanizing compound, and it provides a quick and painless repair. To inflate the tire you're provided with a handful of CO2 cartridges. The upswing of this is that the whole system is compact, very compact. The downsides are that with 9/11 rules in place, you can't ship those little CO2 cartridges via air, and once you've used the cartridges, they're gone.

Slime isn't "new", but it's damn cool. It can adhere to all sorts of bizarre shaped punctures, slashes and gashes, and if you have a tube tire you might be able to fix it without taking it off the rim. The downside of the Slime is that it's Slime. Lots of shops don't like Slime because it can make a real mess of the inside of your tire and wheel, and sportbike riders worry about the potential change in performance from increased unsprung weight and other balancing issues. Some shops won't patch a tire that's been Slimed, and not all patches will adhere to a surface that's been slimed.

What is new is the super cool, teeny little 300 psi 12V pump Slime is selling.....





As the air leaked out, we grabbed the Stop & Go kit and went to work.

Using the reaming tool provided, we cleaned out the puncture, preparing it for the plug.

Next we took the plug and loaded it into the Stop & Go gadget.



Fun with sharp objects...

The tire lay defenseless, on its side. The poor thing had been neglected by some squid... run right down to its chords... Was this a good way for it to end its life? It didn't have much choice in the matter as we approached it and then plunged the awl into its carcass, dealing it a deadly blow.

Then we took the needle tool and used it to insert the syringe sleeve type gadget into the hole.



Attach the Stop & Go gadget to the syringe sleeve thingy and you're good to go...

The rest is a piece of cake. Insert the plug, remove the tool and seat the plug using a pair of pliers.



Cut off the excess and you're left with a plugged tire.



Inflating the tire using the CO2 cartridges was a little more difficult. The venturi effect from the escaping CO2 gas super cools the cartridge, and it's kinda freaky. We inflated a completely empty 190 rear, and the 4 cartridges only netted us 18 PSI.



We tried several plugs in different areas of tread. All were easy to install, and all worked flawlessly. The only issue arose when I failed to pull the plug out far enough to seat it against the carcass. If you make this mistake, the trimmed plug will disappear into the puncture, falling inside the tire.

The "High Speed" Slime is pretty cool and comes in a single shot bottle good for one sportbike tire. It doesn't say this on the bottle or anywhere in the documentation. In fact the bottle says that you need to check their website at Slime.com for sportbike tire Slime requirements (not much good if you're on the road...) Regardless we determined that the bottle was good for exactly one tire, so we started in on our specimen. Already wearing 3 plugs from Stop & Go, we went at it with a screw gun, making two small screw holes side by each.





The cap on the Slime bottle has an ingenious valve core-removing tool built into it.

Carefully removing the core, we pumped the tire full of Slime.

After reinstalling the valve core, there isn't much more to do other than hook up the uber-small pump and let it fill up.



The pump connects directly to your bike's battery with alligator clips, or can plug into a standard electric vest type socket. It had no problem inflating the 190 tire in a reasonable amount of time, although it was a little loud.

The tire needs to be spun around (ridden) to distribute the



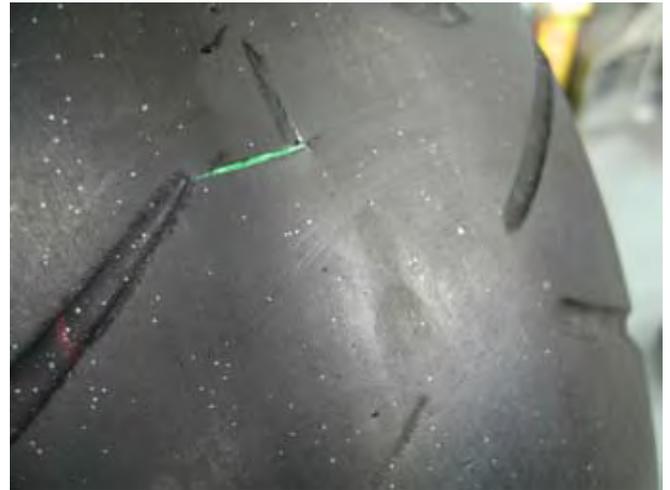
Slime around the inside of the carcass, and to force the Slime into any punctures. We bounced the tire up and down and sloshed the Slime around. Very quickly the leak stopped.



What fun is Slime if you can't play with it? We pull out a knife, and recreated what might happen to your ride if you left it parked at the local Qwiky Mart overnight if you weren't in the best part of town. Imagine coming back to your bike only to find it had been shivved... something like this?



No problem.. The Slime filled it in...



So we had at it again... a few more slashes... The poor tire was left looking like it had been in a jailhouse brawl, but it still held air.

Very cool indeed.. and very hard to argue against. Now that I've seen it with my own eyes I'd be hard pressed to argue the "unsprung weight" thing against it. I mean, come on... we knifed the tire three times and it still held air.

Remember, none of these methods provides a permanent repair, and the instructions with the Stop & Go kit say that a more permanent plug from your local bike shop should replace their plug.

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Here's the deal. Depending on the type of trip you're taking and the potential road hazards you face, we'd recommend owning both systems. It made sense for us to carry the Slime compressor, the tube of Slime and the entire Stop & Go kit (minus the cartridges). This way we knew we were covered regardless of the type of flat we might encounter.

I'd personally leave the Slime out of my tire and opt for the easy to use Stop & Go plug to tackle a small conventional puncture (nail hole, screw etc), but I'd use the Slime compressor to inflate the tire. (I have to add that Stop & Go makes a compressor, but it isn't nearly as small and cool as the Slime unit)

For everyday use and around town I'd opt for the Stop & Go kit, minus the CO2, and instead invest in a miniature high-quality, high-pressure bicycle pump.

If I was on a long trip, or in the middle of nowhere and had a long distance to travel, I might instead opt for using the Slime to patch a flat, especially if the puncture was an odd shape (as this is where Slime excels). Either way I'd use the Slime

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as a last resort (that's just me)

There really is no clear answer. Which tire patch kit to get? You really need both of these products, and I know that's not the answer anyone wants to hear, but it's simply a case of apples and oranges. Both kits excel in certain areas. Carry them both and you're covered.

The Stop & Go kit is available directly from www.stopngo.com, and will set you back \$31.95 .

Slime's PowerSport Smart Spair kit costs \$39.99 and you can find out more about it at www.slime.com.

