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Did You Know

a Low Brake Pedal Could Be an Indication of a Faulty or Worn Wheel Bearing?

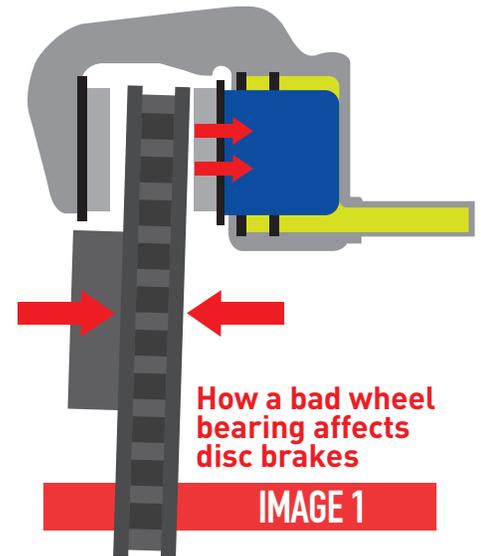
When a vehicle comes into a shop with a low or spongy brake pedal, what is your first thought? Chances are you automatically assume the problem is in the hydraulic system, such as a faulty master cylinder, a leak in the brake lines or a bad caliper.

The cause of a spongy or low pedal doesn't always lie in the hydraulic system. Before assuming a "low brake pedal" is the fault of the hydraulic system, do a thorough brake inspection checklist. As part of that checklist, **make sure to check the play in the wheel bearings.** If you find significant play in the bearing, that could very well be the cause of a "low brake pedal" symptom.

See Image 1: Brake rotors are held in alignment by the wheel bearings. If you have a faulty or loose wheel bearing, the rotor will wobble on its axis, causing the rotor to push the piston into its bore. Now when you hit the brake pedal, the piston must travel farther to apply the brakes. This will result in a low or spongy brake pedal.

Inspection Tip: Always check the hub bearing for runout when doing a brake job. An easy way to check the bearing is to rock the tire back & forth while the vehicle is on the lift. Excessive movement (wobble) indicates a worn hub bearing. A more accurate way is to measure the runout directly on the wheel hub using a dial indicator (**see Image 2**). Please check the manufacturer's specification for acceptable runout variances. Excessive runout can cause brake pulsation, as well as a low brake pedal.

Source: Brake & Front End



This is an important reminder not to make quick assumptions. When doing a brake job, always perform a thorough brake inspection list, which includes checking the wheel bearings for significant play.

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