

Wheels: Richard G. writes, “I have a 2004 Buick LeSabre with disc brakes on the front and rear. My question is, Will the rear disc pads wear the same as the front pads, or will the front pads wear out first? Thanks for your help.”

Halderman: Good question. The answer is it depends. On a front-wheel-drive vehicle most of the weight and therefore, most of the braking, will be handled by the front brakes. If you can see the rotors and the calipers, you will notice that the front brakes are larger than the rear brakes due to the fact that most of the braking will be handled by the larger front brakes. Which will wear out first? If everything is normal and you are an average driver (whatever that is), both the front and the rear will likely wear at the same rate and will be worn out about the same time. However, no vehicle is normal, so from experience, I would have to say that the front brakes will most often wear out first. However, it is not uncommon for the rear brakes to reach the wear sensors first because the lining thickness is less on the rear disc brake pads, especially if you brake gently. So what should you do? I suggest that the brakes be inspected regularly and the pads replaced and the calipers serviced as needed. Most experts recommend that both the front and rear brakes be replaced at the same time to maintain the proper brake balance from front to rear.

