

Are Ceramic Brakes Right for Your Customer?



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As a technician, you know that there are many brands to choose from when it comes to brake pads and brake rotors, in the same way that there are different types of friction to choose from – organic brakes, semi-metallic brakes, and ceramic brakes – when performing repair or maintenance on a customer’s braking system.

Ceramic brake pads, developed in the 1980s, are still a relatively new technology, so there’s a good chance that you may come across customers who don’t need ceramic brake pads on their vehicle but ask for them anyway. Knowing the pros and cons of installing these brake pads is the best way to make the correct recommendation and provide valuable education, when it comes to completing a job with the right parts to fit a customer’s needs.

What are the three main types of brake pads?

1. Organic Brake Pads
2. Semi-Metallic Brake Pads
3. Ceramic Brake Pads

Want to know more about what each brake pad is made of? Check out our [other article](#).

Ceramic brake pad PROS:

- Quiet, emitting a noise that is above the human range of hearing, in contrast to semi-metallic pads
- Reduced brake dust, less likely to stick to wheels
- Long-lasting when compared to semi-metallic or organic brake pads
- Stable under a dynamic range of temperatures for reliable performance

Ceramic brake pad CONS:

- Usually the most expensive brake pad option
- Less ideal for very cold climates with less cold bite than semi-metallic brake pads
- Not as absorbent of heat, resulting in potentially higher braking system temperatures
- Not recommended for severe-duty or performance racetrack use

When to recommend ceramic brake pads to a customer

While there is no clear winner of the “best brake pads” award, there is a time and a place to recommend both semi-metallic brake pads and ceramic brake pads to a customer.

A customer who enjoys track driving or frequently pushes their vehicle to its maximum power on or off-road is not the best fit for a ceramic brake pad recommendation. As mentioned above, due to the heat management properties of ceramic brake pads and their slightly reduced stopping power capabilities, these pads simply aren't suitable for high-performance or severe-duty applications, including towing.

However, a customer who is a frequent city or highway driver, has a daily commute or uses their vehicle as the primary means of shuffling kids to activities, hauling groceries and completing life's more low-intensity tasks, ceramic brake pads are a good fit.

Furthermore, ceramic brake pads, when used for these applications, ultimately produce less noise, keep a customer's wheels and braking system cleaner and have a longer lifespan, making them a good investment in light of the slightly higher cost compared to semi-metallic brake pads.

To conclude, there are no concrete rules governing which brake pads a customer should have installed on their vehicle, but some will definitely serve an individual's specific needs better than others. Being able to confidently break down the pros and cons of ceramic brake pads will not

only help customers to better understand how their braking system functions, but also ensure that they leave with the right automotive brakes for safe driving that extends far beyond the shop.