

## Why I like the IRC GP110 Tire on a KLR

I know, I know, discussing tires is like discussing oil or chain lube. It always fires up the crowd. We all have opinions... and here are the reasons that I like the IRC GP110 on a KLR that gets more street than dirt use. I've been running these on my KLR, and the dual-purpose bike I had before my KLR since the early 90's. I think they make a good on-off road tire that still sticks well on the street.

To appreciate the pattern, I rode in the dirt for five miles, then hit the asphalt for another five miles to clean up the pattern - then took this picture. Here's the basic pattern of the tire (it has about 3,000 miles of use on it at this point):





So let's start with the part of the tire that you'll be on quite a bit – the center section that sees lots of pavement action. On the left I've trimmed the view to focus on the center of the tire. Note that you're almost on a solid rib of rubber. In fact, when it wears way down, there's a solid rib about 2/32 tall in the middle. The tire has lots of contact with the road when on the street in a straight line, giving it reasonable life on the street, as well as smooth operation.

Now let's lean it into a light corner. Nothing aggressive but a turn nonetheless: now you're riding on an open pattern. The tire makes an audible hum when cornering lightly. I *love* the hum, as I get an audible clue that I'm finally using something *other* than the tire center. This open pattern is helpful in the off-road situations as well – it's not closed up like a street tire.





But now let's lean it way over – such as aggressive cornering on the street. See how the side knobs are built into the carcass of the tire? This way they don't flex a lot, and the tire grips well in aggressive street cornering. This tire is not squirmy on the street at all when heeled over. I've been riding with a number of street-tired KLR guys and still seem to put distance on them when in the tight stuff. They're usually not amused.



So let me point out the difference. This is the pattern of a Pirelli MT43. I use it on my KLX250s – and my only dislike of this tire is that it is NOT confidence-inspiring in the corners. The tire is somewhat ‘square’ in cross-section as well, and when you heel it into a corner, you’re putting all that cornering force into these cantilevered, sloppy knobs. They flex easily. See the next page.





Simply pushing on the sidewall knobs of an MT43 results in them flexing... a LOT. To me, that's a major problem – it gives you a very squirrely feeling. The Kenda 270 is like this too – it's the reason I'm not a fan of that tire on a KLR650 either. I've switched bikes with friends who have 270's and in the first turn, I think I'm going down.

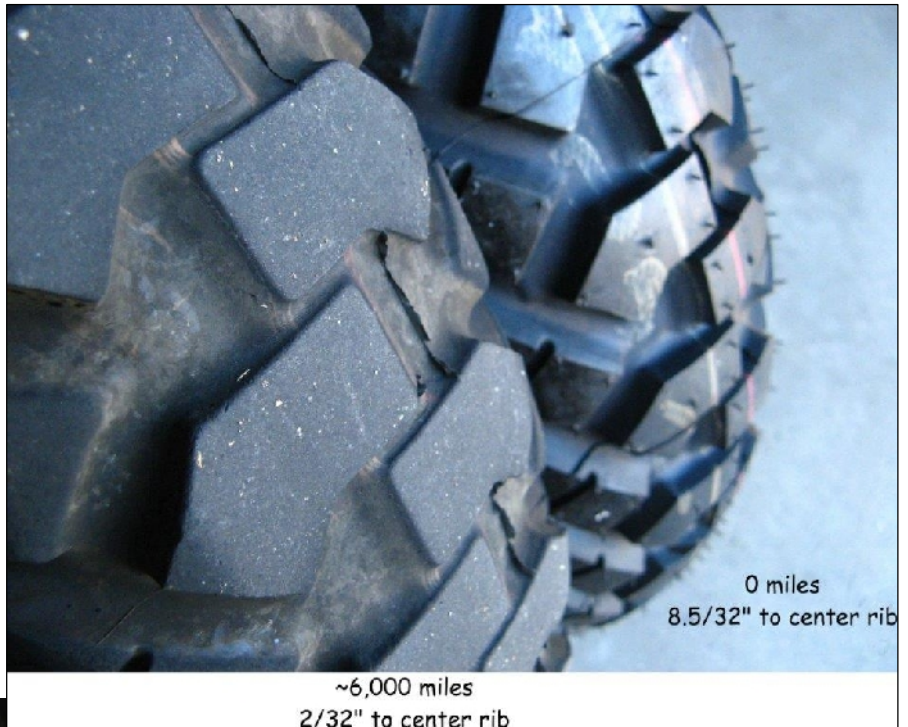
Anyway, that's it – In summary, the IRC GP110 has a tight pattern when going straight, open in the light corners where it doesn't matter on the street but offers an open pattern for the dirt, and then has good traction and response when heeled over in an aggressive street corner. To me, that's the best of all worlds. These tires also are reasonably priced and are much easier to mount than the stiff-sidewall street tires that are occasionally found on KLRs. For me, this is a win-win tire.

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## WEAR:

On the right is a picture of my rear IRC with 6,000 miles, and a new one beside it:

I'm easy on tires (i.e., I don't drive 80 everywhere or drive on the throttle up into red lights) so these tend to last me, on average, over 10,000 miles on the rear. What's interesting is that as the tire wears down near the bottom, the wear rate really slows down. After this 6,000 mile point (on the right), I tend to go another 4,000 to 8,000 miles before the center rib is solid. Maybe you aren't comfortable running the tire in those last 2/32 of an inch (I won't leave on a multi-state ride like this) but I will ride daily around town until the tire is a solid ring of rubber in the middle as shown below:



That picture on the left is the status when the center rib finally becomes solid, and in this case I was at 12,000 miles. It's your call of course.

I run the 5.10-17 rear, but you can also buy it in a shorter-sidewall 4.60-17 size if you're vertically challenged. The common front tire to run is the 3.00-21.

Hope this helps you in your tire choice, depending on the way you ride.

Watt-man

