

Why is there a bulge on my bicycle tire when I inflate it?

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After replacing a bicycle tube, I experienced a problem: When I inflated the tube, there was a bulge near the valve stem. I couldn't figure out how to get rid of the bulge. I thought that maybe I hadn't seated the tube properly, but no amount of reseating made the bulge go away.

A bicycle technician explained to me that I was getting the order of operations wrong.

The order of operations for replacing a tube is

1. Insert new tube.
2. Inflate.
3. Secure valve stem nut.

I had gotten the last two steps in the wrong order: I was tightening the valve stem nut before inflating.

It seems that the Internet tells me that the bicycle technician was wrong, and the valve stem nut should be secured *before* inflating, since it prevents the stem from going into the rim.¹ I don't know who's right, but changing the order of operations fixed my problem, so that's what I'm going to keep doing.

¹ And the Internet seems to feel that the nut is superfluous.