McLAREN
Manufacturer of Tracks and Tires

How To Select the Right Tracks for Your Track Loaders



Rubber tracks are some of the most important components of your track loader. They will impact the smoothness of your ride, which environments your compact track loader (CTL) can operate in, the lifespan of

your machinery, and how much downtime your CTL experiences. As such, it is important to choose wisely. To make the most advantageous choice for your unique situation, consult this guide on how to select the right tracks for your track loaders.

Determine Your Operating Environment

One of the most important aspects of choosing the correct track loader track is determining what type of environment you will use it in. There are many different environments that track loaders can operate in—from smooth, hard surfaces to soft, or rugged terrain. Below, we will address the primary track needs of each type of operating environment.

Environments That Require Low-Ground Disturbance

If you plan on using your track loader for landscaping, concrete work, or in scrap yards, you will likely need to outfit your machine with tracks that have minimal ground disturbance. That way, if you're working on a surface such as someone's lawn, you won't end up tearing up the ground as you maneuver the machinery.

Optimum Traction Environments

On the other hand, if you intend to use your track loader in very wet and muddy conditions, you will need to prioritize traction. In such a case, you may want to outfit your skid steer with tracks that offer aggressive traction such as McLaren's Multi-bar track. Due to the high level of traction that it offers, this track works well in a variety of application environments such as rocky areas, wet areas, and even on concrete and pavement.

Low Ground Disturbance and High Traction

There are also instances where people may want to use their track loader for a wide range of jobs. If you require a high level of versatility from your skid steer loader, you will want to choose a track that offers ample traction as well as minimal ground disturbance.

Typically, more traction means more ground disturbance and vice versa. As such, it can be hard to find a track that offers the best of both worlds. However, McLaren has developed an innovative track that doesn't require you to choose between traction and ground disturbance.

Our Terrapin track is our newest CTL rubber equipment track which features a unique tread pattern that provides excellent grip and a smooth ride on a range of surfaces—from asphalt to gravel. If you're in need of a true multipurpose track, the Terrapin track is for you.

Consider How Long You Plan on Keeping the Machine

Another important aspect to consider when choosing rubber tracks for your compact track loader is how long you plan on keeping the machine.

Short-Term

If you plan on ultimately selling or trading the machinery in a short period of time and only need to use it to complete a few jobs, you may not need to invest in the best or highest level rubber track. In such a case, McLaren offers a line of rubber tracks called Maximizer which are more of an economy version. These tracks offer the highest amount of value for the dollar spent. While their lifespan isn't as long as some of our other track options, the Maximizer tracks cost far less, making them an ideal choice for people on a budget who don't need a long-lasting option.

Long-Term

However, if you intend to keep your compact track loader for as long as possible, you may choose to opt for a higher level rubber track. High-quality rubber tracks offer a host of benefits over lower quality options. In addition to lasting longer, they will also facilitate a smoother ride and reduce the vibration that the machine experiences. As a result, the high-quality tracks will last much longer, decrease undercarriage wear and effectively increase the lifespan of your compact track loader. Thus, investing in a high-quality rubber track will allow you to enjoy the benefits of an increased track lifespan as well as an increased machine lifespan.

Take Your Budget Into Account

The budget that you have to work with will also play a large role in determining the right track for your track loader. Generally, there are two types of track options to choose from when it comes to price range: premium level tracks and economy level tracks. Here are some factors to consider when choosing which price range to adhere to.

Premium Level

If you are able to, it is often more advantageous to invest in a premium level track. No matter what, the more expensive, high-quality track is going to give you the best return on investment. Although you will have to pay more up-front, the track will have a longer lifespan and experience less downtime.

Unlike lower quality tracks, the majority of the rubber on a premium level track will wear down before it breaks rather than breaking prematurely before the tread wears out. Thus, those who have economy-level tracks may think that their tracks are in good condition because their tread isn't worn out, and then experience an unexpected break which results in costly downtime. To avoid such downtime which can hurt productivity,

customer relationships, and your bottom line, it is more beneficial to opt for a premium quality track.

Economy Level

If you can't afford to invest in a premium level track, McLaren also offers a range of quality economy level tracks at a more accessible price point. As previously stated, economy level tracks can be advantageous in some instances. For example, if you use your machine infrequently or plan on selling your machine after a short period of time, you may want to spend less money on an economy level track that will be suitable for your needs. However, it is important to be aware of the potential risk for increased downtime when opting for a lower quality track.

Choose Your Supplier Carefully

One of our most important tips on how to select the right tracks for your track loaders is to choose your supplier carefully. While many people focus heavily on track patterns and the price when choosing a track for their track loader, who you purchase the track from is ultimately the most important factor to consider.

Rubber tracks are the most expensive replacement part that you will ever buy for your skid steer other than its engine. Despite their high cost, tracks are a disposable component no matter how much preventative maintenance you do, which means they can't be repaired and they aren't insurable. If the track gets damaged, you will have to throw it away and purchase a new one. Thus, purchasing rubber tracks poses a significant financial risk.

If you buy your tracks from an irreputable company that hasn't been in the business for very long and produces poor quality tracks, you could end up having to spend $800 to $2,500 per side on replacement rubber tracks for skid steers if the track breaks, in addition to the hidden costs of downtime. As such, it's always more beneficial to spend a few hundred dollars more to purchase your tracks from a more reputable and established supplier like McLaren Industries that has been in the business for over 20 years. McLaren is one of the few OEM skid steer rubber track manufacturers that also produce aftermarket rubber tracks for sale. Most competitor companies are only trading companies. For more information regarding our industry-leading rubber tracks, contact us today at 1-800-836-0040.



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