

Winterizing your car helps prevent a long cold season

Most people think that if they winterize their cars in the fall, they'll make it through the winter without problems. And they're mostly right. Others think that if they haven't had a problem yet, they won't have one for the rest of the winter. (Now there's a recipe for trouble.)

Difficulty starting? A cold engine is a stiff engine — it's hard to get the pistons moving, to draw in the fuel, and get started. So it needs more battery power. In cold weather, your battery may produce only 40 per cent of the power

it produces in warm weather, so give it a break — use a block heater. A block heater, with a timer to turn it on a couple of hours before you need your car, will make starting much easier.

Take a look at your battery terminals. Is there any white deposit on them? That corrosion can insulate the terminals and prevent the battery giving your car its first boost of power in the morning to get it going. If your battery is getting a little elderly, you may not get a second chance.

It can take 40,000 volts to

zap a spark into your cylinders. If the ignition wires are worn or cracked, some power may not make it, and you could have starting troubles.

Another tip — keep your gas tank at least half full. That limits any condensation in the tank, so you're less likely to get gas line freezing. Add a little gas line antifreeze every second fill and be sure.

You may hear a squealing noise from the heater fan. That could indicate a worn bearing in the fan motor, which will probably seize up on you when you need it most.

If there's a lot of moisture on your windshield, and the defroster can't remove it, you

could have a faulty heater core. Don't delay, get it fixed — you need to be able to see

where you're going, and defrosters have enough trouble keeping windows clear.



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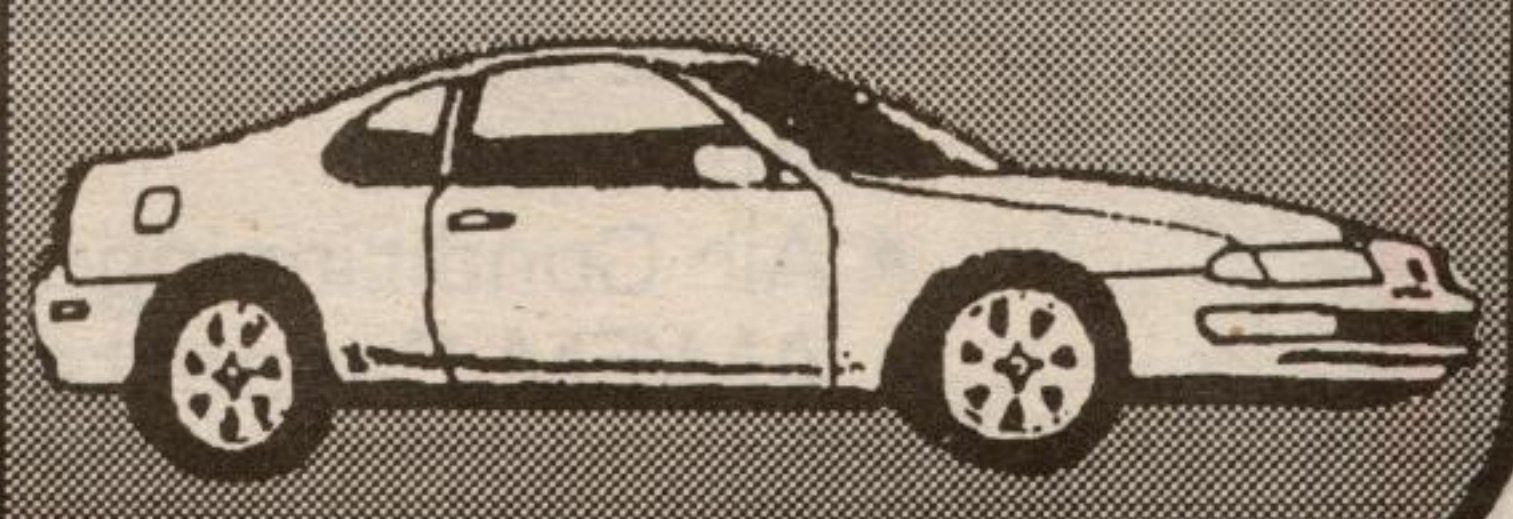
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