

Perilous life is led by car's spark plugs

Like the hero of a spy adventure thriller, the spark plug lives a perilous life. Assaulted by a dangerous cast of "villains," such as searing heat, corrosive chemicals, jolting electric current and jackhammer pounding, the plug makes agent 007's tribulations seem like a slap on the wrist by comparison.

According to Champion Spark Plug Company, the plug itself operates in temperatures anywhere from sub-zero to 1,500°F or more. Occasional blasts of corrosive combustion gases reaching heat intensity of more than 4,000°F can assault the plugs.

Pressure impacts of 2,000 pounds per square inch and electrical discharges of 10,000 volts or more also batter spark plugs. In 10,000 miles of driving, the spark plug will fire 15 million times.

After approximately 10,000 miles, the punishment the plug endures takes its toll. Electrode wear, caused by the punishing combination of electrical and chemical assaults, is irreversible. So, the plug can no longer provide economical performance.

That's why automotive experts recommend installation of a new set of plugs after 10,000 miles on most cars.

THE INSIDE STORY

A device allowing mechanics to look inside an automobile engine without disassembling the engine has been developed by American Optical. This flexible fiber rod contains its own source of cold light and saves service personnel time and labor.



Book helps locate certified mechanics

Finding a qualified auto mechanic in your area can be simplified, thanks to a new publication issued by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (NIASE). The institute has published a new directory, "Where to Find a Certified Mechanic for Your Car."

The directory lists names of approximately 7,000 U.S. repair establishments where skilled, certified mechanics are employed. Mechanics earn certification by passing stringent exams, administered by NIASE, a non-profit independent organization. Mechanics are listed in all 50 states.

Copies of the directory can be obtained by sending \$1.95 to NIASE, Suite 515, 1825 K. Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20006.

Here's how to keep your car

Spotless inside

Staining the car's interior fabric, especially for the first time, can be a trying experience. Usually the owner has been proudly keeping the outside clean and bright, but he or she has very little knowledge about how to remove a smudge of chocolate or shoe polish from the seat fabrics.

Not always difficult

Whether or not the stain is difficult to remove depends mainly upon the type of stain and the fabric. Most automobile seat and door panel upholstery use three types, according to Fisher Body Division of General Motors.

1. Vinyl coated fabrics. 2. Genuine leather. 3. Synthetic cloth fibers (nylon or rayon).

Vinyl and leather are relatively easy to clean. In fact, there is but one recommended method of removing stains from these two types of fabrics.

Use lukewarm water and only the suds from neutral soap worked into a piece of gauze or cheesecloth. This treatment should work on most stains.

Synthetic fibers

Cleaning nylon or rayon cloth fibers is more of a challenge.

For best results, stains should be removed as soon as possible after they have been made. The longer they set, the more difficult the job becomes. Experts warn that treatment of some stains, especially where water treatment is specified, may cause discoloration or disturbance of the finish. These negative results, however, may be considered preferable to the stain itself.

Before discussing what can be done for stains, one should first learn what NOT to do when cleaning fabric. Here are four points to remember:

1. Never use gasoline or naphtha.
2. Do not use solvents

such as acetone, lacquer thinners, enamel reducers or nail polish remover.

3. Do not use laundry soaps, bleaches or reducing agents. They weaken fabric and change its color.

4. Do not use too much cleaning fluid because an excessive amount may destroy rubber padding or leave a solvent ring.

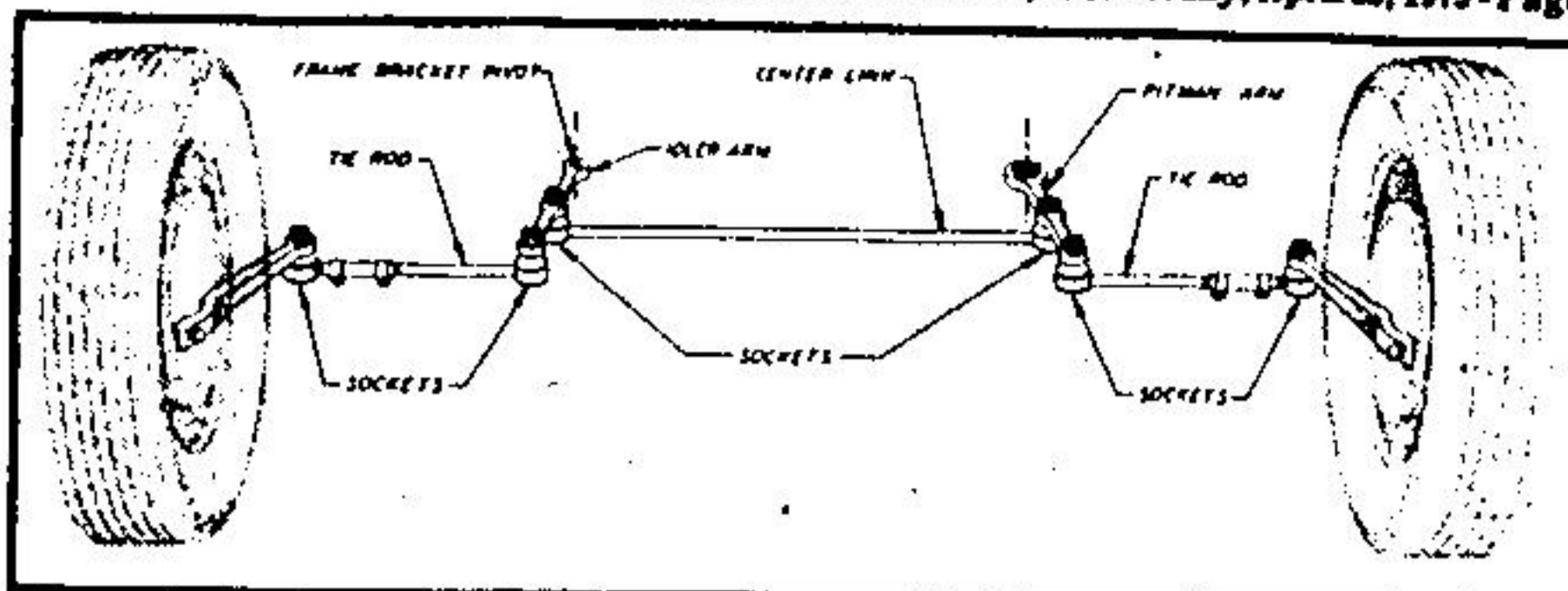
There are two ways of cleaning general soilage from cloth fabrics. One is with a cleaning fluid and the other is with detergent foam cleaners.

Cleaning Fluid Use

Cleaning fluid, which can usually be obtained through an automobile dealer or reputable automotive supply house, should be used to clean stains containing grease, oil or fats. Here's how to use it:

1. Vacuum area to remove loose dirt.
2. Always clean at least a full panel or section of trim by masking off adjacent trim along stitch or weld lines.
3. Mix detergent type of foam cleaners strictly according to directions on label.
4. Use foam only on a clean sponge or soft bristle brush. Do not wet fabric excessively or rub harshly with a brush.
5. Wipe clean with a slightly damp absorbent towel or cloth.
6. Immediately dry fabric with a dry towel or hair dryer.
7. Rewipe fabric with dry absorbent towel or cloth to restore the luster of the trim and to eliminate any dried residue.

Good housekeeping inside the family car can mean extra dollars at trade-in time, so it should be worth your effort to keep it tidy and spotless.



Critical steering components often are overlooked by car owners. Once trouble is sensed in this system, then it may be too late to avoid expensive repairs. Regular lubrication and inspection of the steering by your favorite service man can prevent problems before they start. (Photo courtesy of TRW)

Know how to tell when car's steering system needs attention? You should!

When the red light or gauge on your dashboard warns of low oil pressure, there's generally time to do something about it. But when you get warnings of something amiss in your steering system, it could be a sign that potentially dangerous and expensive repair damage has already been done.

That's one reason it pays to have your favorite car service man check the front end at every opportunity. And that's why one should keep components in proper alignment, state of lubrication and adjustment.

To help you recognize the signs your car will give you when steering components are out of whack, below is a list of symptoms that can result from malfunctioning front end parts.

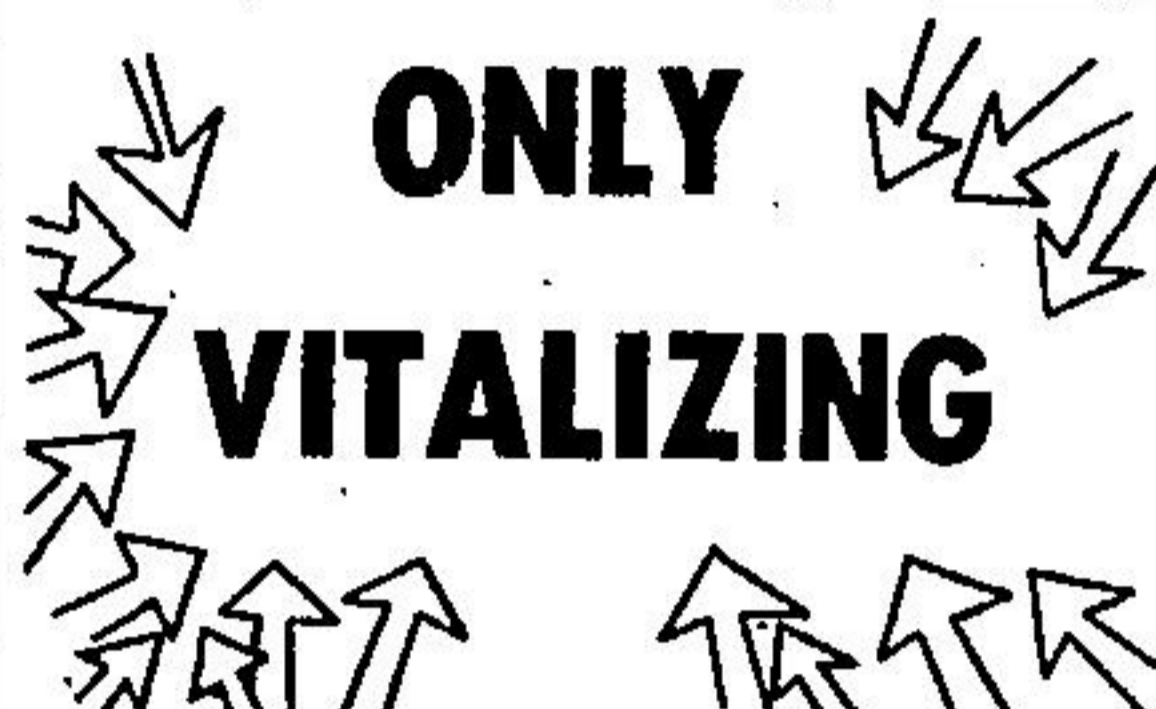
SYMPTOMS — hard steering, car pulling to one side, car wandering, uneven tire wear, front wheel shimmy, loose steering, heavy thumping on rough roads.

POSSIBLE CAUSES — worn or binding ball joints,

front end out of alignment,

loose front wheel bearings,

loose or dry steering linkage.



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