



TClinic

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THE CARE AND FEEDING OF LEAF SPRINGS

Tired of your teeth rattling whenever you drive on anything but smooth road? Believe it or not, you can do something about it. The TC springs were thought necessary for good handling. This stiffness is only made worse when the original lubrication dries up and dirt works its way in between the leaves of the springs. This causes extra friction between the leaves and makes the springs take on all the characteristics of a solid steel bar.

Manuals for the TC and earlier models recommend that the front and rear springs be greased every now and then. To do this, you should first clean off the outside surface of the spring with a wire brush. Next, jack up the car under the chassis to take the weight off the spring. Then pry apart slightly. You can spread them even more by wedging a screwdriver between them. If you have access to compressed air, it's a good idea to blow out the accumulated dirt from between the leaves. Now you somehow have to work grease in between the leaves. Try using a thin knife blade. Once that's done, let the car down off the jack, bend the clips back around the leaves, and you're ready to go.

The only catch is that the grease will wash out from between the leaves when you ride in heavy rain, and dirt will again work its way between the leaves; so you're right back where you started. The only solution to this problem is to cover the springs somehow. Don't try using regular adhesive tape or electrician's tape; it isn't flexible enough. A better solution is to install a set of the leather spring gaithers which are quite effective

in keeping out dirt and water, and they usually have built-in grease fittings which make future lubrication considerably easier.

As you have probably guessed by now, the whole clean and lube procedure takes a lot of time, but it's the best way to do the job. If you want to try a shortcut, go to any motorcycle shop and buy a can (spray-type) of chain lubricant. It's very thin and volatile, but when it evaporates it leaves behind a film of thick grease or a layer of dry lubricant like graphite or molybdenum sulfide, depending on which brand you use. Spray the chain lube generously over the springs and let it penetrate between the leaves. Do not use the car for several hours so that the volatile carrier will have time to evaporate. The results are not quite as good as the normal method, but it is certainly a lot easier! I used the spray lube on my TC's springs but I found it necessary to relube about every 1000 miles.

Needless to say, you should examine the springs for wear when you clean and lubricate them. A neglected spring will wear at the points where the end of one leaf rubs against the longer leaf spring next to it. The result is a groove or thin spot which weakens the leaf. When this wear is excessive, say more than .020", the leaf is likely to break, as I have found out the hard way. This can be dangerous and the only way to avoid it is to clean, inspect and lubricate the springs on a regular basis.

by Chip Old of the Chesapeake Chapter, NEMGTR
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These instructions still hold true today.