

# Improving Car Performance UNDER THE HOOD

## How To Change Spark Plugs And Their Wires



An oil company study indicates one mis-firing spark plug can waste up to two gallons of gas per tankful. Spark plugs and other ignition system elements do not fail suddenly. Heat, electricity and chemical reactions combine to wear on components, eventually causing them to malfunction.

Most auto experts can't overemphasize the importance of keeping the family buggy tuned up. Tune-ups, they say, are usually necessary about every 10,000-12,000 miles on today's cars to keep them running at peak efficiency.

A major tune-up involving tests of the starter, alternator, distributor, carburetor and emissions control equipment is probably best left to the professional mechanic. But, a

minor tune-up of such items as spark plugs, spark plug wires, points (if your car does not have electronic ignition) and condenser is generally not beyond the skill of a do-it-yourselfer.

To change the spark plugs, you'll need a ratchet and socket set. Begin the job by carefully removing the spark plug wires. Never grab the wires directly and pull — you're likely to break them. Rather, grasp the boot of each wire (attached to the plug), and gently work the boot loose. Remove each plug one at a time and replace. Insert the new plug and turn it by hand at least three turns before using your wrench.

Note: Before tightening each plug, make certain the

threads on both the plug and the engine cylinder are clean. Plugs should be tightened to the degree where the gasket is just crushed.

Lastly, insert the appropriate wire boot over each new plug and fasten securely. Which brings up a good point: A significant part of any tune-up is the inspection of the wires leading from the spark plugs to the distributor cap.

Spark plug wires carry thousands of volts to your plugs and so, it's vital that they operate efficiently at all times. How often should these wires be checked? If you're an average driver, you should make a visual inspection at

least once a year, and more often if your car gets heavy use. Look for cracks, hard brittle boots and external sparking while the engine is running.

When these wires need replacing, the experts recommend replacing them with a set of silicone-jacketed wires which meet Detroit O.E.M. specifications and can last up to twice as long as synthetic wires. (For a handy booklet that shows how to detect and replace faulty wires, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Car Care Tips," P.O. Box 1726, Midland, MI 49640. Useful tips: Always replace

a full set of wires at the same time — not only the apparently defective wires. However, it's important to replace them one at a time — completing the connections on each before going on to the next. To avoid burned knuckles, always work on a cold engine.

# March Is Good Month For Bison Baseball Team

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Since March is generally regarded as the month of strong winds, it is only natural that after on 0-9 beginning, the Howard baseball team should end the month like a whirlwind.

The Bison, currently on a five-game winning streak, have won ten of their last twelve contests for a 10-11 mark. Their last five victims were George Mason, Georgetown, Delaware State (2) and American University.

The chief perpetrators of Howard's turnaround have been freshman Darryl Darcus, a veterans Donald Freeman and Tim Roche. Darcus, whose nickname is "Roadrunner" for his speed on the basepaths, leads the team in hitting with a .372 average. He also leads the squad in hits (29), doubles (6), triples (3) and in stolen bases (15 successes in 16 attempts).

Freeman, the Bison's "clean up man," is the second-leading slugger on the squad with a .365 mark. Riche has a team-leading five homers (the single-season school record is nine) and a .306 average to boot. Another freshman, Barry Jackson, is Howard's fourth 300-plus hitter, batting

.314. The pitching has also improved, with the ERAs, swelled by the early season blowouts, beginning to take a downward turn.

"It's hard to prepare for an outdoor sport inside," said Coach Chuck Hinton, "and that was what we were doing because of the weather. Our pitching is coming around and so is our hitting. We just had to get some games under our belts."

## Help Wanted

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79 MG Midget	78 Mazda GLC
79 Toyota Celica GT	79 Pont. LeMans SW
80 Buick Skylarks (2)	80 VW Scirocco
80 Mazda GLC	80 Buick Century 4 Dr.
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