

GOOD TRACKING

By Dick Ray
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If your motor car does not track well, or lurches from side to side while running down the rails, it may be due to worn out wheels. The easiest cure is to install new wheels from Fairmont. However, with the cost of new 16" wheels being about \$82.00 each (plus freight), it would be wise to check out the old ones first to make sure that they are indeed worn out. This article will show you how to check out your wheels to see if they need replacement.

The measuring method is simple, and requires only a carpenters square and a metal straightedge about 1" wide and a minimum of 16" long. Figure 1(a) shows the ideal configuration of a good wheel. Look for a "gap" at the outer edge of the wheel, indicating the proper taper of the wheel surface. Figure 1(b) shows a wheel worn "flat" with no taper. Wheels like these are still usable, but the car will not track well. Figure 1(c) shows the configuration of wheels that are worn out from the rails and brake shoes to the point where the gap observed between the square and the wheel surface is in the middle of the wheel. Wheels that have this type of wear should be replaced.

If your wheels are worn nearly "flat", the low cost solution is to place the flat ones at the back of the car, and replace the front pair with new ones. In most cases, this will greatly improve the tracking of the car. Rear wheels should be kept as pairs; in other words, don't replace just one wheel at a time. This could cause the car to run toward one side or the other, causing rapid wear, since the wheels have a different diameter.

One final tip...always handle wheels, especially new ones with a pair of gloves. The manufacturing process leaves a razor sharp edge around the inside edges of the spoke holes, and these can cause nasty cuts.

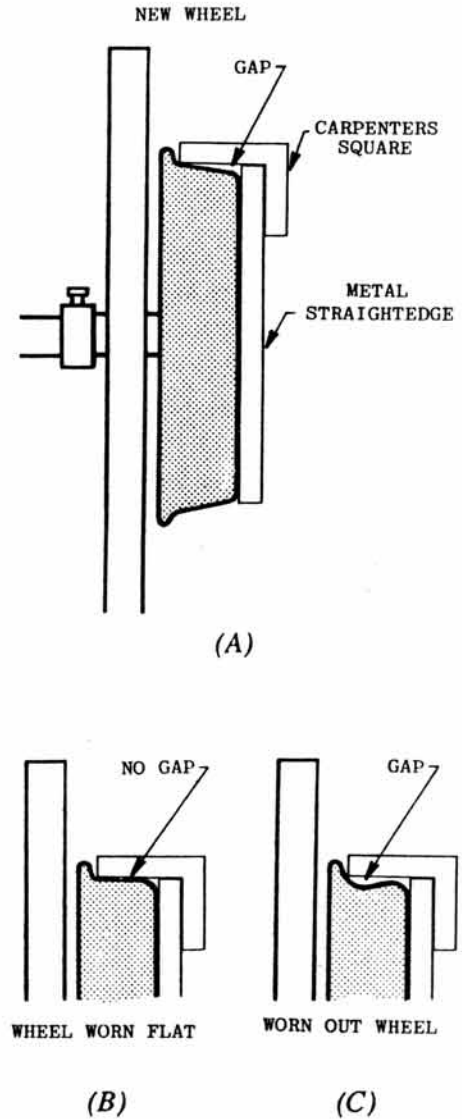


Figure 1.
Method for Checking
Wheel Wear