

Questions from the June 18, 2020 Carolinas Club

Tech Conference Call



Email your tech questions to your club's tech advisors at: CarolinaTechCall@gmail.com

Question 1, Fuel gauge issue: Installed an in-line fuel filter by cutting the solid fuel line going from the tank to the fuel pump. I installed it with two pieces of 1/4 " rubber fuel hose. Now my fuel gauge does not work (shows "Full" all the time). Any suggestions?

Response: The problem is most likely a loss of ground when the solid fuel line was cut as the fuel line was acting as the ground for the fuel sending unit. Try running a ground wire from one of the screws holding the fuel sending unit to the gas tank to a good ground location and that should resolve the problem.

Update: The recommendation worked!

Question 2: How can you make your tires last longer?

Response: See detailed response below.

Question 3: I have a wooden steering wheel, Moto-Lita style. Do you have a recommendation on someone that can restore it for me?

Response: Recommend Mike Ruchman. He does custom restoration of British Bakelite, wood, and leather steering wheels. (<https://www.new2youwheelrestoration.com/restoration.php>). He gets great reviews on a number of the British car websites. Contact him at: ruckmn1@yahoo.com or 813-313-7343. He occasionally has NOS and/or restored steering wheels for sale too.

Question 4: I installed some LED light bulbs (four) for turn signals on my BJ8 (aka 1156's), and they will not work. It is negative ground and all electrical connections are good. Suggestions?

Response: Installing LEDs for both turn signals and brake lights is a great upgrade. When using LEDs for turn signals on our old British cars you will, as a minimum, need to replace your turn signal flasher with an electronic flasher. Our standard Lucas style flasher does not allow a low enough amperage, so suggest using, if your flasher is a 3 pin like BJ8s, a FL-3 Red (\$12.95) from SuperBrightLeds. On a late model BJ8's, if all 4 corners blink at the same time when using your turn signal after hooking up the new flasher, then disconnect the light green & purple wire from the "P" terminal on the flasher and take it to a good earth (ground). The warning lights are then driven individually by the left and right indicator circuits and controlled by the turn signal switch. Therefore there is no risk of current bleed, as the opposite warning light receives no current at all. This can reverse the left and right tell tales warning lights on your dash. If this happens, you can swap over the tell tale lamp holders, or leave as is.

Question 5: What can you do to lessen the likelihood of an electrical fire or a short in your LBC?

Response: There are a number of things to check:

- Check the grommet in the boot where the main battery cable comes into the boot for deterioration of the grommet and chafing.
- Check the main harness where it comes into the engine bay for deterioration of the grommet and chafing.
- Observe that there are only electrical wires going through the grommets.
- Consider adding a fuse on all non-fused "hot all the time" wires. These are brown & brown & blue, and white.
- Check for bad ground connections.
- Check for corroded or lose bullet connectors.
- Look for botches by DPO (Dreaded Previous Owner)

Use a pink eraser or 600 grit sandpaper to clean contacts, and smear a little dielectric grease on the contacts to help prevent future corrosion.

How To Make Your Tires Last Longer

We suspect that not many of us actually wear out the tires on our Healeys (unless we are racers) before they suffer from aging issues. However there are some things that we might need to attend to to keep them serviceable for as long as possible.



Wheel alignment: The only adjustment on the Healey is the toe in adjustment and from memory that is about 1/8 of an inch. It will track better if the toe in is correct. When that is out of adjustment this can also cause unnecessary wear on the tires.

Brake adjustment: If the brakes are not adjusted equally when we press the brakes, especially in emergency situations, we will tear the rubber off one or more wheels quicker than the others. A good test is to ensure that all four tires have equal pressure and go do an emergency stop on a dry road surface. The skidmarks should be pretty much equal if the brakes are adjusted and working correctly.

Tire pressures: A soft tire will decrease the gas mileage, give you a more comfortable ride but makes steering heavy, wears the treads and can damage the side walls. Another issue with soft tires is that they don't perform well in hydroplaning conditions.

On the other hand, running a higher tire pressure will make them perform better on wet roads and the tires will last longer but the ride might be more harsh. The original tires on the Austin Healey from the factory were probably set at 20 to 22 pounds per square inch and that may be much too soft for our current radial tires. If we look carefully at the sidewall of the tires installed on our vehicles it will give a maximum recommended tire pressure. Therefore we would suggest that we do not run our cars with pressure higher than that. The ideal pressure might be something a little bit less than the maximum to get good wear yet some comfort in riding.

Rotating tires: We suggest to get even wear that after about 5,000 miles it is worthwhile rotating tires bringing the front wheel on one side to the rear on the same side unless you have tires that can be used in either direction. If that is the case you could put the right front on the left rear and the left front on the right rear position.

What to do in the winter months: The best thing we can do is whenever there's a day when we can get the car out is to drive it even just a few miles rather than letting it sit on its wheels for months in one place. If the weather conditions where we live are so bad that we can never get the car out in winter then the thing to do is to jack it up and have the wheels off the ground.

How to delay deterioration of the tire rubber: Tires like to be in a cool dry and dark place. This means that there may be some benefit in covering the car including the tires even when it is in its garage especially if sunlight comes through the windows. Sunlight deteriorates tire rubber.

Ozone from electrical equipment can also cause tire deterioration or any rubber material for that matter if the vehicle is next to such electrical components for a prolonged period.

Tire shine options: We like to make the sidewalls of our tires shine especially when entering some kind of a show but some of the tire shine options are better for the tire than others. As we understand it, the water-based tire shine is good for the tire whereas the chemical-based shine may not really be very good for the rubber material. In looking at a couple of bottles on my shelf I can see that one is water-based (**303 Aerospace Protectant**) and the other one has quite a bit of alcohol in it. So it might be worthwhile reading the small print on the bottle before applying it to tire walls.

