

HINTS FROM AUSTIN'S MORRIS GARAGE®

Hi, everybody, this month, we'll have a look at a little-discussed subject, cables. Let's start with the simplest, the choke cable and its cousin, the starter cable. Over the years, not many of us pay attention to these vital devices. However, because they seem trivial things to pay attention to, maintenance of these items is nonetheless important. Being such a simple thing to do, lubricating these highly necessary pieces of equipment is important to easy starting of your car. Moisture is the enemy of a sliding cable, and the best way to keep it happy is to periodically (maybe every 10 to 25 thousand miles) clean and lubricate it. This is really a simple operation.

The plan is to disconnect the inner cable from the device it controls (choke linkage and/or starter switch). Note the position of the trunnion or other connecting device and merely get into the cockpit and fully extract the cable you have chosen to maintain. Traces of rust may be noticed, which of course, must be done away with. The simplest way to clean the rust away is to use a pipe cleaner dipped in a bit of solvent on the end of a length of baling wire. Start this assembly into the inner cable and work it back and forth completely through the inner cable, repeating the process with a new pipe cleaner until all signs of corrosion leave the reamer clean. Do not use copious amounts of solvent on the pipe cleaners, as the outer cable will be penetrated by the liquid and get quite oily under your dash.

The only other way to clean the cable is to remove the under-dash cover, if fitted, and the outer cable. This is not hard to do and may be the best way to proceed. Do not mix the outer cables if both are removed at the same time.

Once the outer cable is devoid of corruption, the inner cable must be cleaned as well. Obviously, this is a simple operation, and can be done quickly. Next, the assembly must be lubricated.

Only a very slight coating of motor oil or, preferably, silicone lubricant must be used for these applications. Use a suitable cloth saturated with oil, and draw the inner cable

through a fold in the cloth. When using a spray silicone, all that is needed is one pass over the length of the cable. Then insert the cable into the outer one, reconnect the business end, (reinstall your under-dash panel—if you removed it), and you're all set for another few thousands on the clock. Then all you have to do is to periodically wipe any excess lubricant from the exposed inner cable.

As to the speedo and tach cables, the procedure is much the same, except the difficulty in inner cable removal, of course, is greater. The easy route is to undo the cable from the instruments. The inner cable(s) can be easily extracted. You will usually not find rust inside the speedo and tach cables unless the car has been standing for a long time, exposed to the elements. If corrosion is evident, the outer cable(s) must be removed and thoroughly dealt with, using about the same method as above.

In normal cases, usually, all that is needed is to lubricate the inner cable(s) with either a generous coating of white grease or commercial cable lubricant and return them to their housings. Remember to always insert the inner cable correctly into its instrument before screwing on the outer cable nut.

That's all for this month. Regards, Jerry

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