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## What does it mean if your serpentine belt is squealing

Your vehicle's serpentine belt is a vital component that keeps your auto running smoothly. Here's more information about what serpentine belts do, and how to spot serpentine belt problems.Serpentine Belt FunctionIn the past, automobiles were built with individual belts for the power steering, air conditioning, alternator and other components. Today, modern vehicles are manufactured with one long serpentine belt that functions for all of the above under-hood components. In some vehicles, the serpentine belt also runs the water pump. Serpentine belts keep components spinning, and prevent metal-on-metal damage from adjacent parts. Serpentine belts are like giant rubber bands that can wear out over time. However, most will last between 60,000 and 100,000 miles.Sounds of Serpentine Belt ProblemsSerpentine belts often make noises when they're slipping or worn. You may hear a loud squealing noise when you start the car. If the belt is noisy, the belt may simply be wet from being splashed by a deep puddle or standing water you drove through. If there's an oil or antifreeze spill on the serpentine belt, the materials can cause belt slippage. Water-splashed serpentine belts will dry. Oil- or antifreeze-splashed belts should be replaced, and the source of the oil or antifreeze leak must be fixed to avoid the problem recurring.Visual and Performance Signs of Serpentine Belt ProblemsPeriodically inspect your serpentine belt, even if it isn't giving you any problems. Ribbed serpentine belts may show signs of chipping, cracking or fraying. Missing or too-close ribs are indication of a failing serpentine belt. If the belt is wearing unevenly, it may be misaligned. The misalignment can indicate a problem with the pulley, which should be investigated. Performance issues with the serpentine belt may manifest in a battery that drains more rapidly than usual. Your power steering or air conditioning may fail. A check-engine light is another sign that can indicate your serpentine belt is ready for replacement.Self-Tensioner ReplacementMany modern serpentine belts are installed with self-tensioning devices. Other serpentine belts require mechanical adjustment from time to time to keep them at the proper tension. Your mechanic can adjust your serpentine belt (if mechanically adjusted) and visually inspecting the belt. serpentine belts require very little attention. Avoid spilling any type of lubricant or antifreeze on it. If you put a lot of wear and tear on your vehicle, have your mechanic routinely inspect your serpentine belt, since it may wear prematurely. MORE FROM QUESTIONSANSWERED.NET Jupiterimages/Pixland/Getty Images The serpentine belt or v-ribbed belt on a Volkswagen is a flat belt that powers the engine accessories, such as the air conditioning compressor and alternator. Removal of this belt can be accomplished by the vehicle owner, as it requires no special tools. However some Volkswagen vehicles, such as the Golf and Jetta are equipped with an auxiliary v-belt that must be removed before the serpentine belt can be accessed. Park the vehicle on a level surface and set the parking brake. Turn the steering wheel to full right lock. Disconnect the ground cable from the negative battery terminal. Loosen the retaining bolt using a wrench. Pull the clamp off the terminal. Note the path of the belts around the engine pulleys. The new belts must be installed in the same way. Draw a diagram, using a pencil and paper to help keep track of how the belts are installed. Loosen the power steering pump mounting bolts, using a socket. Allow the pump to slide toward the engine. Pull the v-belt off the engine pulleys and remove it from the vehicle. Rotate the tensioner pulley, by hand (it will be located just below the alternator) away from the belt to release the tension on the belt. Pull the serpentine belt off the engine with your hand. Thread the new serpentine belt around the pulleys following the drawing you made before disassembly. Release the tensioner pulley to tighten the belt. Examine the auxiliary v-belt and replace if it is cracked or overly worn. Lay the v-belt into position over the engine pulleys. Check that the v-belt is properly seated into the engine pulleys. Pull the power steering pump away from the engine and tighten the mounting bolts using a socket. Place a straight edge over the two pulleys at the v-belt's longest run. Press down at the midpoint of the belt with your finger. Measure the distance between the straight edge and the belt with a ruler. The distance should be less than 13/64-inch. Tighten the v-belt by loosening the power steering pump mounting bolts, using a socket. Pull the pump away from the engine and retighten the bolts. Reconnect the ground cable to the negative battery terminal. Slide the clamp over the terminal; tighten the retaining bolt using a wrench. (Updated on December 9, 2020)Whenever your internal combustion engine is running, your serpentine belt is running too. The serpentine belt provides mechanical power to the power steering pump, air conditioning compressor, alternator, and many other important peripheral accessories.If you ever start hearing strange noises coming from your engine area, then it might be due to your serpentine belt. Cold weather is notorious for making these noises much worse.Whatever problem your serpentine belt is facing, colder temperatures can exacerbate them. As those problems get worse, the noises get louder and more annoying.Of course, cold weather can cause squeaks and squeals to come from any number of components in your vehicle. If the serpentine belt is not directly making these noises, then the noises may be caused by one of the engine accessories.These are the accessories in which the serpentine belt powers up by transmitting mechanical energy to the. If cold temperatures are making the serpentine belt's job harder, then these other accessories may malfunction or start making strange noises themselves.Top 5 Causes of Serpentine Belt SquealingCold winter weather is never a friend to your vehicle. If your wheel well suffers ice accumulation, then strange noises will follow. If you hear squeals, then it could be your engine belt or serpentine belt.But in most cases, it will be your serpentine belt that is making these noises. They may even get worse as you step on the gas pedal to accelerate. Here are five of the most common reasons your serpentine belt is making noise when cold or accelerating.1) Bad or Worn TensionerThe serpentine belt is given the proper amount of tension by a device called a drive belt tensioner. The tensioner is basically a pulley connected to an adjustable pivot.If you ever have a bad or worn-out tensioner, then it'll affect the tension of your serpentine belt on the pulleys of the system. Your serpentine belt will become loose, resulting in strange noises when you accelerate.2) Belt MisalignmentSometimes the serpentine belt might be in good condition, but it is simply misaligned. If your mechanic recently installed a new serpentine belt in your system and you still notice annoying sounds, then they probably didn't do a good job of aligning the belt onto the pulleys properly.In other cases, a worn-out tensioner could cause the misalignment if the belt is loose.Read also: Serpentine Belt vs. Timing Belt - What's the Difference?3) Belt is Worn OutSerpentine belts used to last about 50,000 miles in older vehicles. However, the newer serpentine belts are made from highly durable synthetic rubber. The scientific name of this material is ethylene propylene diene terpolymer or EPDM for short.If your serpentine belt is made from EPDM, then it can last up to 100,000 miles. After that, you should notice the ribs of the belt getting worn out. This will cause it to move poorly over the pulleys, creating all kinds of noises. Cold weather can also deteriorate the belt faster too.4) Idler Pulley MisalignmentYour serpentine belt is not the only component which can become misaligned. Aside from the pulley of your drive belt tensioner, the idler pulley can cause the serpentine belt to make noises too.The idler pulley is another one of the pulleys which help keep the serpentine belt moving. It helps move the other engine accessories too. If the idler pulley is misaligned, then the serpentine belt will make noise.5) SlippageIf you don't take care of the loose serpentine belt problem quickly, then the entire belt could slip off the pulleys. This will cause the most noise because all your important engine accessories will suddenly stop functioning at the same time.

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