



5 Tips For Tackling Your First Big Car Repair

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You're a capable weekend car mechanic. You've got basic tools and skills. You've mastered oil changes and tire rotations. But when a big repair comes along, it's decision time. Take it on yourself, or call in a pro?

That's the choice I faced at the end of last summer, when my 1990 Mazda Miata suffered a crankshaft failure. Expecting a quick repair, I soon discovered the car needed a whole new engine—and I discovered this just after I'd disassembled it to the point that it couldn't be put back together.

Instead of paying a mechanic to mend my Miata, I decided to try replacing the engine myself. I did it—eventually—though I made plenty of rookie mistakes on the way. Here's what I learned.

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Aftermarket shop manuals are great for learning the tools and parts you'll need, but they sometimes read like a general overview (step one: remove radiator, front bumper, and windshield washer reservoir). Internet forums can offer detailed instructions and tricks specific to your car, usually with step-by-step photos. Unless you drive something really outlandish, there's probably a site like VWvortex or JeepsUnlimited to help you. But don't forget that Web forums, while helpful, are just Web forums. Get a factory service manual from your manufacturer if you're diving deep into a big repair.

Set Up Your Workspace

I started my teardown in the corner of my parents' two-car garage. I got all set to pull the engine when I discovered I had no room to maneuver my engine hoist. Even with two muscular brothers, moving a half-disassembled car was a masochist's game of *Tetris*. So don't make my mistake: Clear plenty of space before you start the job, and position your car for maximum elbow room. I found the best spot was right in the center of the garage, though not everyone in my family shared this view.

Expect It to Take Time

The first time doing a repair always takes the longest. Tinkering on nights and weekends, my adventure lasted nearly a month, far beyond what I'd anticipated. There were lots of trips for parts, tools, and advice, and times when sheer frustration halted my progress. Make alternative transportation plans before taking your car out of commission so you don't get fired when your Saturday project is still in pieces on Monday morning.

Take Pictures, Make Notes, Label Everything

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When you're on step two of a big job, it's tempting to think you'll remember which bolt goes where, but by step 14 you'll have a plethora of fasteners, washers, and clips lying around that give no indication where they came from. Save yourself a thousand headaches by being organized from the start. Use sandwich bags, empty egg crates, and plenty of labels. A phone camera and a dry-erase board are indispensable for noting the layout of wires, cables, and brackets, and neither one will blow away behind the workbench when you open the garage door.

Use a white-paint pen on metal parts to indicate where parts came from or their orientation. Choose a universal reference point, like "front of the car," "passenger side," or "driver side," and label things with arrows and sides. Label clearly based on situation too. Don't be afraid to write notes directly on the part, or leave yourself notes about how things go back together, such as the orientation of the distributor relative to the block. Masking tape is also a great tool as well. Loop it around a hose, wire, or connector and close a nice 2-inch flap on the other side that you can use to label what it does or where it goes.

Make a Final Checklist

There's a natural excitement to putting everything back together. You'll be tempted to hustle through the final touches. Don't. The last bit of wire routing, bolt tightening, or body-panel aligning is what separates a pro-quality repair from an embarrassing hack job, and if you slap it together for a test drive, you might never get around to correcting it. (Nobody's impressed by a guy in a Miata with no hood, front fenders, or bumper—in case there was any doubt.)

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So make yourself an exhaustive final checklist, including everything you need to inspect, double-check, torque, and test before you put that machine back on the road. Go over it at your desk or at the dining table—not in the garage, where you'll be anxious to get going on your first drive.

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Dodge Ram Dakota Bighorn 2011 2012 Workshop Service Repair Manual

The 2010 Dodge Dakota is a survivor. In 2009, the Chrysler Group applied for bankruptcy, and few anticipated the aging Dakota to make it with the procedures. It's still here-for a couple more years, at least. The Dakota returns mostly unmodified from 2009, after a detailed spruce up in 2008.

It's offered in extended and also team taxi models, with a selection of six- or eight-cylinder engines, manual or automatic transmissions, and rear- or 4×4. With a base rate of \$22,755, the Dakota is a bargain larger than the Chevrolet Colorado/GMCCanyon twins as well as the aged Ford Ranger. It competes much more directly with the Nissan Frontier, the Toyota Tacoma, and the Honda Ridgeline. Some variations overlap full-size pickups.

All Models:

Dodge Dakota 2000 Quad Cab 3.7L 4.7L – Workshop Service Repair Manual.

Dodge Dakota 2003 Factory Service Manuals Dodge Cars, Trucks.

Dodge Dakota 2005 3.7l 4.7l – Workshop Service Repair Manual.

Dodge Dakota 2001 Quad Cab 3.7L 4.7L – Workshop Service Repair Manual.

Dodge Dakota 2003 Workshop Service Repair Manual.

Dodge Dakota 1991-1996 Workshop Service Repair Manual.

Dodge Dakota 1997-2000 Workshop Service Repair Manual.

Dodge Dakota 2005 2006 2007 Workshop Service Repair Manual.

Dodge Dakota 1987-1996 Factory Service Repair Manual PDF.



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The 2010 Dodge Dakota aims for a tough styling handle basic job vehicles, and also it succeeds-but it's a little institutional. The Dakota puts on the very same angular look it's borne for recently years, with the boxier forms fitted to it in 2008. Square-jawed also from the back, this latest Dodge truck bucked the typical pattern as well as expanded plainer and also a lot more cheap-looking when it was last revamped. The vast crosshair grille quickly telegrams "Dodge" to truck buyers, and also the Dakota's fixed panels as well as mid-size dimensions provide it a few of the big-boy stance of the larger, much more lush Ram trucks-as do the hulking fenders.

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There's a mild wing on the back side for small aerodynamic improvement, but it's the equivalent of an extra eyelash on the Ironman. Humble outside, the Dakota is non-stop Simple inside, with a sea of black plastic pieces barely taking an industrial break to reveal big, white-face determines, an Eighties-vintage green-LCD audio display screen, and friendly, traditional climate-control handles.

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