



Shop Solutions

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CLEANING KEEPERS

When cleaning valve train parts it is so easy to lose the tiny keepers. We always keep any extra keepers we have in case of losing one, but there's always that one head that you don't have extra keepers for. We purchased a very inexpensive item on Amazon to use for the cleaning process. The stainless steel mesh Tea ball that would normally be used for loose leaf tea works great! It clamps shut and we just hang it from the side of the parts basket and the keepers get cleaned right along with the spring parts. No more lost keepers!

Ronnie Myers
MAR Automotive
Philadelphia, PA



POLISHING ARBOR

I made an arbor to polish piston pins and pilot bushings that can be chucked up in my lathe, or even in a drill chuck. First I cut off the head of a long carriage bolt. This one was 3/8" coarse and will fit in a small drill chuck. Then added a nut, followed by a Chevy rocker arm ball (3/8"). Then the part to polish, followed by another rocker ball and tightened up with another nut. The rocker balls work great to locate and center something like the wrist pin that has a larger I.D. than the arbor shaft.

Wes Schell
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BMW UNDER PRESSURE

One of the most difficult heads to pressure test is the BMW DOHC 6 cylinder. It is nearly impossible to plug the water outlet on the side of the head, until now. A "T handle drain plug" from a boat is the perfect size, and easy to install and remove. It expands inside the water port for a perfect seal. No need to waste a freeze plug, and they only cost about \$5.00 at the boat shop.

Scott Fisk
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Hanahan SC

MAKING THE SEAL ON WET HEADBOLTS & STUDS

40 to 50% of our business is hi-performance boat engines, and the head bolt/stud sealing is critical on these engines. Jet boats use “waste” water from the jet pump to cool the engine and the pressure applied to the water jacket can easily exceed 50-70 pounds with a fast boat! Inboard/outdrive prop boats pickup lake water at pressure ports in the lower unit, and the impact pressure varies with speed, but will exceed one pound per mile an hour at speeds above about 75MPH, which today is an entry level performance boat! We have tried many methods and sealers to keep water out of the oil on engines with “wet” head bolts. The best solution we have found is to tap the bolt holes in the deck with a new tap and tapping fluid, then spray each hole with brake cleaner and shop air to dry and remove any remaining dirt and rust. We use a Phillips screwdriver to apply a high quality stud sealant, this is not the time to buy cheap pipe dope at the hardware store. You want a sealant that is consistent in its viscosity and particle size. We completely fill the deck threads to the minor diameter of the hole, taking care to coat every thread and then we remove any extra sealant from the deck with solvent. We put a dab of sealer on to the threads of one bolt and take another bolt and roll the threads together to evenly distribute the sealer to the entire thread. The goal is to keep water from finding a path between any gaps in the sealant. After more than 25 years, we haven't had a single leaking head bolt or stud.

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PRICE TALK

The phone rings, “How much is a valve job on a pair of early 350 heads?” Sound familiar?

These are generally the first words you hear from a customer and seem to reflect the fact that your prospective customer's first concern is COST. Should you quote a “ballpark” price? Or maybe offer the best case and worst case scenario? Maybe just shoot a quick price and get back to work?

Answer-None of the above.

Two cardinal rules dictate the best time and way to talk price:

Rule #1- Always create value before you quote price.

Rule #2- Never quote price to an unsold buyer.

Create value by establishing your credentials. Tell them you'd like to see the cylinder heads, in this case, to help diagnose the problem before helping them decide what kind of work you'd recommend. Tell them how many years you've been doing this work and how many people you've helped. Tell them about the quality of your machines and the brand name parts you use. Describe the procedures you follow. You know you do great work - just convince the prospect!

Creating value will go a long way toward making the sale, but you have to do one more thing to turn that prospect into a customer: Gain their trust. How? By letting them know you stand behind your work and by offering names of satisfied customers who'll support that claim. By thoroughly discussing the problem like a professional, and like a friend, they too will know you are someone they can depend on.

Follow these steps, develop a rapport, develop trust, and you'll find that price, although important, won't be the dominant consideration.

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