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Measuring Clearance for Wheels & Tires

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1st Article

In the process of restoring my 1957 Corvette race car back to "as-raced" condition, I needed to put on wheels and tires that matched as best I could tell what was originally used. From photos and conversations with the drivers, I knew the car ran with seven-inch Torq Thrust wheels. As for the tires, they used whatever the Goodyear or Firestone guys had available at the track. Based on photographs, the tires for at least one race were Goodyear Blue Streaks, but given the expense of reproduction racing tires, I wanted to be sure they would fit before laying down the bucks.

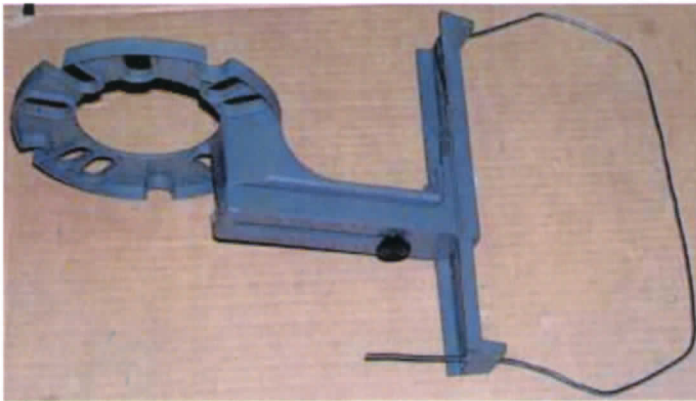
To accomplish this, I discovered a clever little item that made my job easy: the Percy's WheelRite Wheel and Tire Fitment Tool. The tool attaches to the hub and adjusts for the height and width of the rim. A wire is used to simulate the profile of the tires. Since my '57 body was not on, I used my 1960 as the Guinea pig. It worked! Here's how you can do it, too.



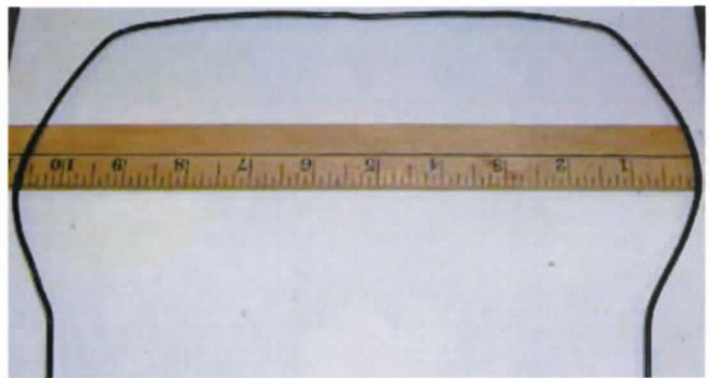
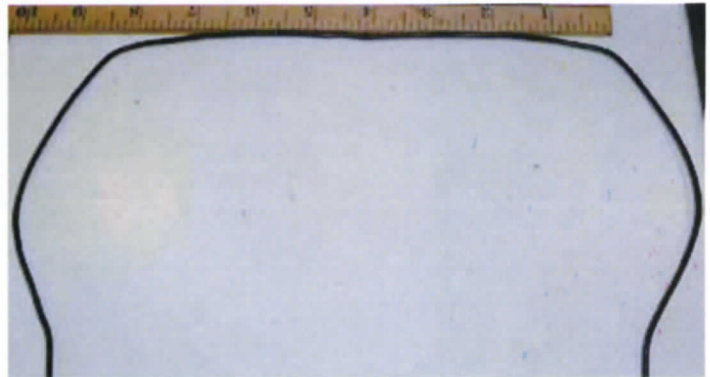
Adjust the WheelRite to the width and height of the desired wheel and attach it to the hub.



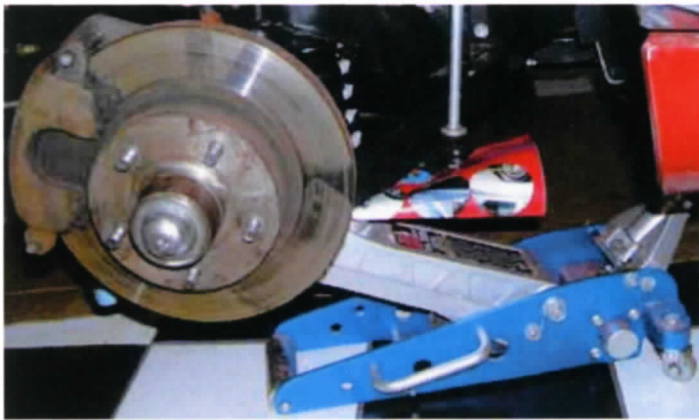
Bend the wire over an existing tire to obtain a rough initial shape.



WheelRite wheel and tire fitment tool. Note the adjustments for both wheel height and rim width.

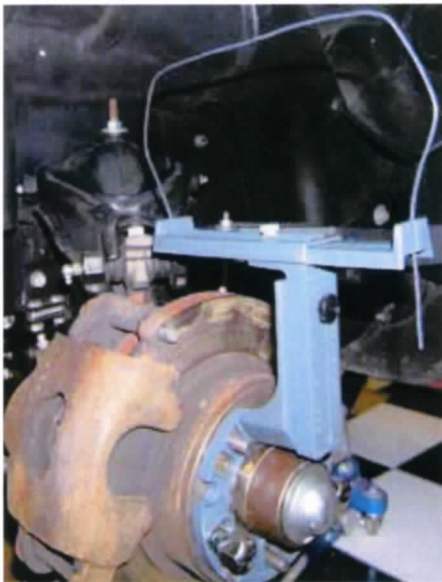


After the initial bending of the wire, adjust it to match the tire tread (above) and profile (below) widths.



A jack must be used under the A-arm to carry the weight of the car on the spring so the same tire to wheel well distance as when driving is maintained. The other three tires should be on the ground.

Attach the wire to the WheelRite and slide it into the slots to the desired tire height off the rim. Turn the tire all the way to the left and right, rotate the hub, and check for clearance issues. The rear tire will likely not be a problem if the front fits, but this should also be checked just to be sure.



It fits!