



# THE MODEL T FORD

## ITS REPAIR, SERVICE, & RESTORATION

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### Regreasing Front Wheel Bearings

Unlike the rear axle Hyatt roller bearings, which have grease cups on the axle housings to replenish those outer bearings, the front wheel bearings on the Ford require a bit more work in routine service. The Ford manual lube chart suggests that those important front wheel bearings be greased every 1,000 miles by refilling the hub cap.

With today's tours at speed, the front bearings need to be checked, cleaned, and re-greased at least biennially, or every 5,000 miles, by removing the wheel and bearings - both outer and inner - to confirm all is well.

Start by removing the hub cap. (The "Improved Car" with wire wheel hub is shown in these pictures.

Wood wheel front hub servicing is similar.) Next, remove the cotter pin from the spindle nut, then remove the nut and the toothed lock washer. (Note left hand threads on right front [passenger], right hand threads on left front.)

Remove the Ford outer bearing by turning with a wrench. The later Ford wrench has nice lugs that engage the flats on the taper bearing, which makes it easy to remove and later adjust.



Remove the bearing for cleaning and inspection. In the photo below, notice the red grease remains in the hub cap, but the red grease in the bearing has begun to turn dark. This is a sign that the grease is working, but starting to degrade. Time for fresh grease!



Remove the wheel hub, as the inner bearing race should be a light press fit on the spindle. A puller is handy for removing the hub. Remove the inner bearing by tapping it out carefully from the inside with a long thin rod. The dust cap normally falls away as the inner bearing is driven out. In the photos to the right, the red grease is still in good shape but the bearing should be cleaned well to inspect it, too.



Clean all the bearings in preparation to inspect and regrease them. All the taper bearings should be clean and without cracks or excess wear. Also inspect the inner races for cracks, as well as the wheel hubs.



Grease well, including the inner races, and slather gobs of grease into the hub cavity, too. Refit the inner bearing, topping it off with the dust shield. The hub can then be tapped with a mallet or wood block back onto the spindle. Alternately, you can fit the dust shield over the spindle and press on the inner bearing, driving it with a sleeve tool that doesn't impact the taper bearings before fitting the hub. This is needed at times when the press fit is really nice on the spindle surface.



Grease the outer bearing, being sure to fill all the voids in the taper bearings well. Then thread on the bearing, noting the direction of the threading. Using the wrench, tighten the bearing so the hub is snug or binds, then back off a quarter turn or so. The hub should then turn freely, without stiff resistance, nor be loose. Add the toothed lock washer and then tighten the spindle nut in place so the cotter pin can be fitted. Test to be sure the bearing didn't lose the adjustment made when tightening the nut.



Finally, secure the spindle nut with cotter pin. Refill the hub cap with fresh grease and replace the cap.



As a last step, spin the wheel so it revolves at a good speed. Allow the spinning to continue until the wheel comes to rest, as it should, with the valve stem at the bottom.



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