

## Mercedes-Benz Tinkering - 380 V8 Timing Chain Inspection

The first thing anybody asks you when you say you have a 380SL for sale is: "Does it have the double-row timing chain?"

The timing chain issue is a well-known problem with the early eighties' US-version 380 V8 engines. These came with a single-row timing chain, which tend to break, with catastrophic results (typically bent valves, basically requiring a rebuild). The solution is to not wait that long, and retrofit a double-row chain.

The double-row chains still can break, but it's much, much less likely.

If it's about to "go", you'll hear a slapping noise when you start the car (until the oil pressure builds up). If you hear that, you might want to consider towing the car to the mechanic.

### So how do you tell?

I wondered this myself, and found references on the Internet to "**just get a mirror and stick it in the oil filler and look at the chain**". Well, it took me a little while to figure it out. Let me try to save you some time.

Get yourself one of those "dentist's mirror" things (the automotive version; Sears sells them) and a flashlight.

Open your oil filler cap and have a look around:

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Stick the mirror above the camshaft, bent so you can look to the right (i.e., to the front of the engine, where the timing chain runs).

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Angle it to where you can see the chain (it's all the way on the front of the engine):

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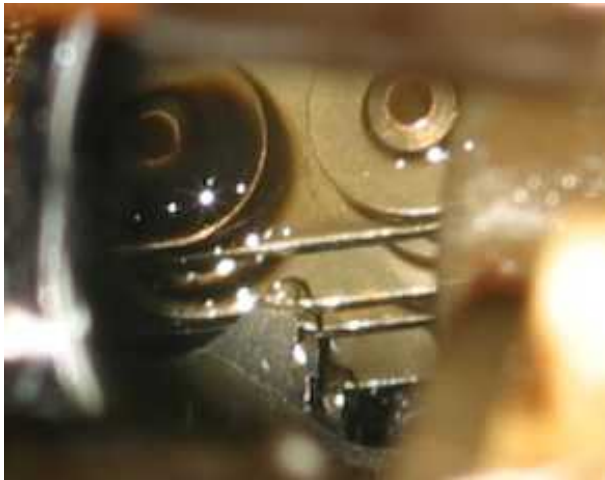


Here is what you want to see:

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Two chains side-by-side:



Happy hunting!

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