

SECTION 1

GETTING STARTED Projects 1–8

PROJECT 1 ★ *Getting Ready*

Time: 15 minutes

Tools: Jack, jack stands, 10-millimeter wrench for battery

Talent: ★

Applicable years: All

Tab: \$0

Tinware: \$0

Tip: Read your planned project first!

Performance gain: Longer life expectancy

The first step in approaching any of the projects in this book—and this seems obvious, but it's important—is to read through your planned project. Planning ahead will give you an idea of what to expect, how many friends to invite over, and how long it's liable to take. Make note of any parts, tools, or supplies you might need and have them ready. Sunday night is a terrible time to be hunting for gaskets when you have to drive to work on Monday morning!

Speaking of friends, it's always good to have one or two around. Their extra hands can be useful, they can read out information to you, and provide moral support. If necessary, they can also make runs to the parts store.

In many cases, you will be working under the car. This is not a good time to take chances. I like to use a hydraulic floor jack to raise the car and four jack stands for supports. These items are quick, safe, and fairly inexpensive. The best surface is a level, paved driveway or concrete floor. Make sure the car is well supported before you crawl underneath it. Concrete blocks are not a good substitute for jack stands, and please don't ever work under a car that is only held up by a jack.

If you are leaving the wheels on, ramps will also work. It's easiest if you have a spotter to guide you up.



When jacking up the rear of the car, put the jack under the differential. All but the earliest cars (such as this one) have a flat section there that is nice and stable.