



# Swift Sprint

What's the first thing you think of when you hear the words "Swift" or "Sprint?" Do you picture graceful athletes racing one other around a cinder track? Or do you think of a family of automobiles produced by Suzuki, a company better known for manufacturing motorcycles?

We may have clouded the issue with the photograph you see above, but then you should know by now that we've never been able to pass up an opportunity for a visual pun. In case you're still confused, we'll be looking at three variations of the same basic design, the Chevrolet Sprint, Suzuki Swift, and Geo Metro. And no, you haven't picked up a copy of *Runner's World* magazine by mistake.

Citizens in urban Japan are not permitted to buy an automobile unless it can be proven that they have a legal place to park the car when it's not being driven. Traffic congestion in the U.S. isn't quite as bad as it is in Japan, but it's getting close. In some

areas of this country, a very small car that can be used for a swift sprint to the market makes a lot of sense. I don't think the designers imagined their cars being used for cross-country trips with three kids and a dog. You can tell by the names GM and Suzuki picked. These cars aren't marathon runners, they're sprinters.

Chevrolet began importing Sprints and four-door Sprint Pluses from Japan for the 1985 model year. The Sprint name and body style continued until 1989, when the Geo Metro was introduced. The Metro's body is slightly larger and more rounded than the original Sprint, but continues to use the same one liter, three cylinder engine. If you need to use the GM model lettering system to order parts or look up service information, Chevy Sprints and Geo Metros are called M cars.

Someone at Suzuki must have decided that they could sell their own cars as well as GM could, and

# Swift Sprint

Suzuki began setting up a dealer network here in the States soon after Chevrolet got started with the Sprint. Suzuki Swifts differ from the other members of this tiny trio in one important detail, they have slightly larger engines. Entry level Swifts are equipped with a 1.3 liter single overhead cam four cylinder engine, while “high performance” Swift GTs get a 1.3 liter double overhead cam four cylinder engine.

## Maintenance Reminder

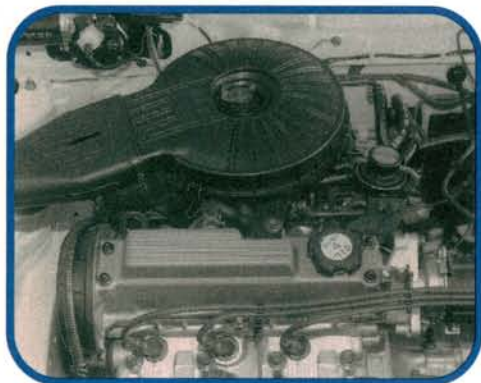
While gathering information for this article, each of our sources put the importance of regular maintenance at the top of their lists. Even though many Swift/Sprint/Metro owners will use their cars for short sprints, they can still run up the miles, a few miles at a time. Sticking to a maintenance schedule,

even one that exceeds the factory recommendations, will assure a longer service life with fewer unexpected problems.

Due to the relatively low initial purchase price of these cars, maintenance may be a low priority with some owners. The price of neglect can be high, however. The engines and transmissions in these cars are working extra hard, especially if they are used exclusively for stop and go city driving. We heard several reports of relatively low mileage Suzuki engines that turned into oil burners or self-destructed after the owners decided that oil changes were optional.

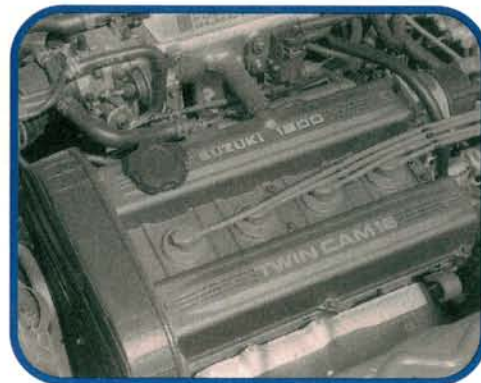
We'll share additional Sprint, Swift, and Metro service and maintenance tips with you in the following photo captions.

— By Karl Seyfert



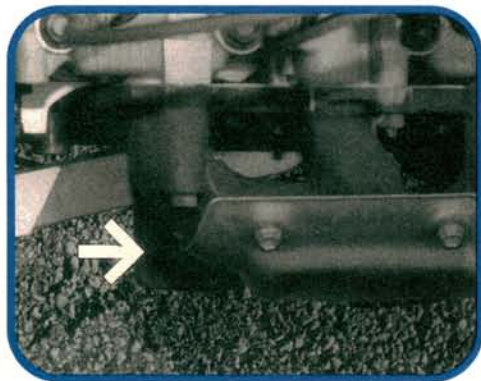
1

There's plenty of room to work in this engine compartment, thanks to the Sprint/Metro's three cylinder engine. The engine looks like it would be more at home sitting in a motorcycle frame. This engine requires periodic valve adjustments. Adjust the valves with the engine at operating temperature.



2

Suzuki saved a few extra fireworks for their own versions of these cars. Entry level Swifts are equipped with a single overhead cam four cylinder engine that also requires periodic valve adjustments. The Swift GT gets a twin cam four cylinder (shown here) with hydraulic lash adjusters.



3

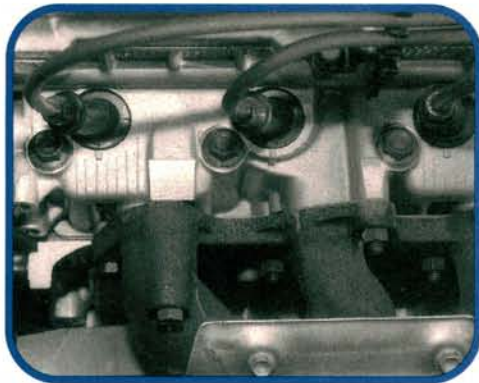
You've probably heard it a million times, but regular oil changes are especially important on all of these engines. If oil changes are few and far between, the rings may seize to the pistons, turning a low mileage car into an oil burner. Our friends at the Suzuki dealer recommend 3,000 mile oil changes.



4

Early three cylinder Sprints (1985-86) may develop a coolant leak at the head gasket. Look for the leak at the front of the engine (in car position), in the area near the center cylinder. A revised head gasket was added to production to correct this problem and can be retrofitted to early models.

# Swift Sprint



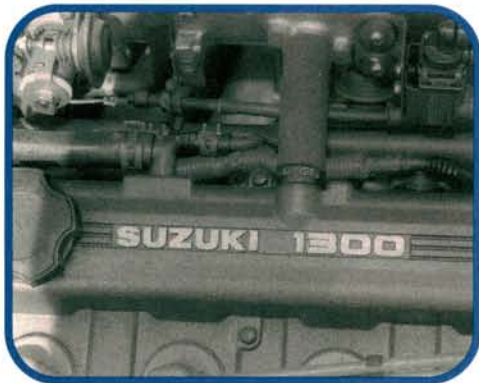
5

Head bolts should not be reused, as they may stretch over time. If you are replacing head bolts, be aware that there are two different part numbers which represent two different lengths. They are not interchangeable. Make sure you order and install the right head bolts for your application.



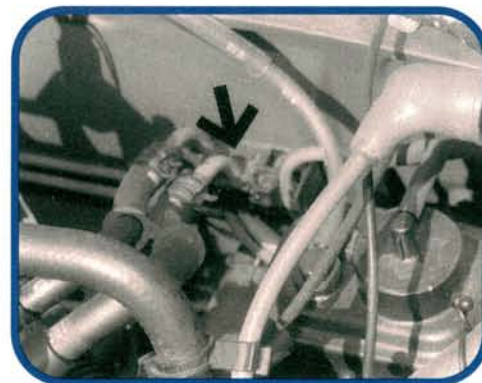
6

These engines aren't supposed to be valve benders, but don't bet the farm on it. The right combination of engine RPM and bad luck may hang the valves open long enough to smack the pistons. Suzuki and GM recommend a 60,000 mile replacement interval. Several thousand miles sooner is good insurance.



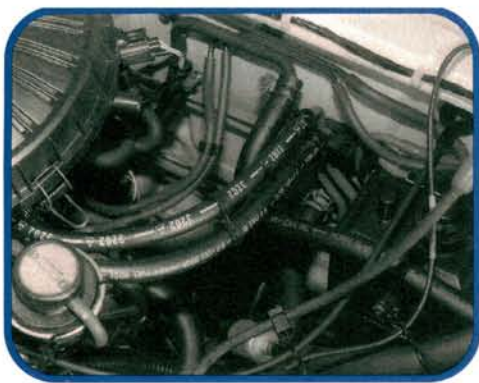
7

A carbon buildup on four cylinder Suzuki valve stems may cause the valves to hang open slightly. This causes a loss of compression, which may lead to a no-start when hot. Revised valve guides correct this problem by scraping the carbon off the valves as the engine operates.



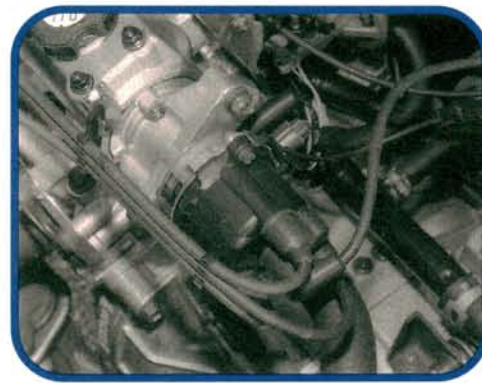
8

On 1989-90 Swift GTs with port injected four cylinder engines, the sound of the electric fuel pump pulses may carry through the firewall fuel line mounting bracket. The noise is more noticeable inside the car and may not be heard under the hood. A revised fuel rail with dampener corrects this problem.



9

I looked all over the engine compartment and couldn't find a fuel filter on this carbureted Metro. That's because it's back near the fuel tank. This out of the way location may cause the filter to be overlooked. Make sure the fuel filter is replaced during each major service.



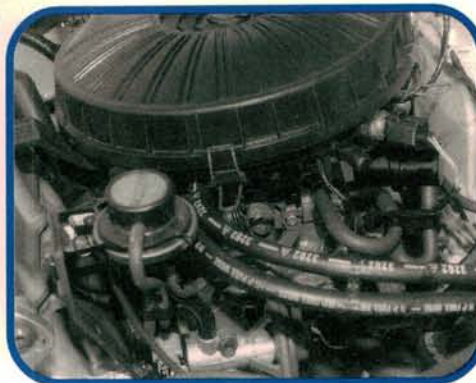
10

The distributor is driven off the rear of the camshaft on all three engines. Jumper the Check Connector terminals, then check the timing at the crank pulley. The tamper-resistant Torx bolts that maintain the distributor position are the only fly in the ointment if adjustment is required.



# 11

The base idle speed screw on port injected Suzuki models is located under this rubber plug in the throttle housing (arrow). Before adjusting the base idle speed or TPS, remove the rubber throttle housing inlet hose and remove any carbon deposits from the throttle housing.



# 12

Sprints and Metros have had an assortment of fuel systems, including fuel injection with a turbo, throttle body injection, and a simple carburetor like the one on this base model Metro. We can't cover the adjustment procedures for each. Check a manual or the underhood sticker for the basic specifications.



# 13

The Check Connector is located behind the left strut tower. Jumpering the Check Connector terminals puts the engine management system into open loop and returns the timing to its base setting. Refer to the underhood sticker for the proper Check Connector terminals to bridge.



# 14

A damaged or melted wiring connector at the underhood fuse and relay panel may cause intermittent alternator charging or other odd electrical problems. Remove the panel, then turn it over to check for damage. An intermittent or poor wiring connection will generate heat and melt the plastic panel.



# 15

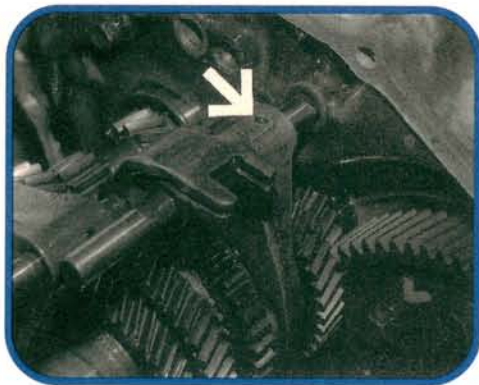
Some 1985-88 Sprints may develop a rattling noise from the brake booster area when the engine is idling with the brake applied. This problem is more common on Sprints with automatic transmissions and usually happens when the engine is cold. A revised vacuum check valve is available to correct the problem.



# 16

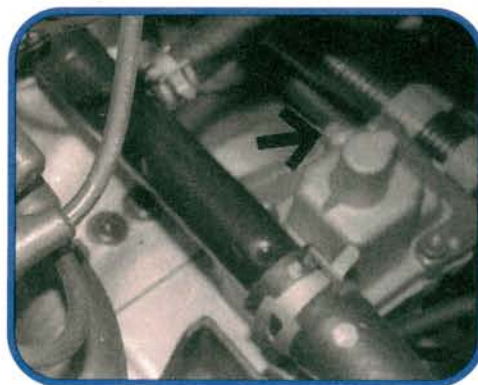
Oil may follow the speedometer cable into the passenger compartment. The cables on models through 1991 couldn't drain back into the transmission because of the design of the driven gear sleeve. Several revised cable parts are available to correct the problem and should be installed as a set.

# Swift Sprint



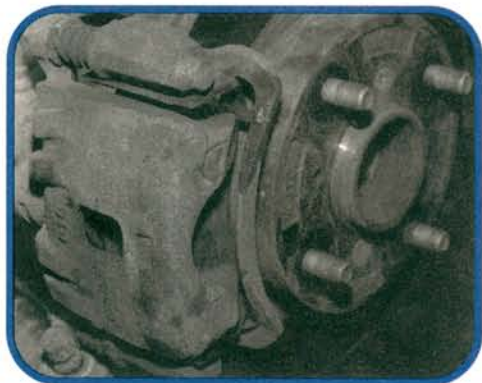
17

Regular lube changes prevent premature transmission bearing failures. Early transaxles had open bearings that were easily damaged by debris in the lube. Later bearings are shielded. The shift fork roll pin had fallen out on this transmission. The magnet caught the pin before it could do further damage.



18

A loose or missing gear shift interlock bolt may cause a transmission oil leak on Swifts. The leak may be mistaken for a driveshaft seal leak. A new part has been released (P/N 25321-60B01) and the bolt torque has been increased to 20 ft-lb to correct this problem. Use thread locker on the bolt.



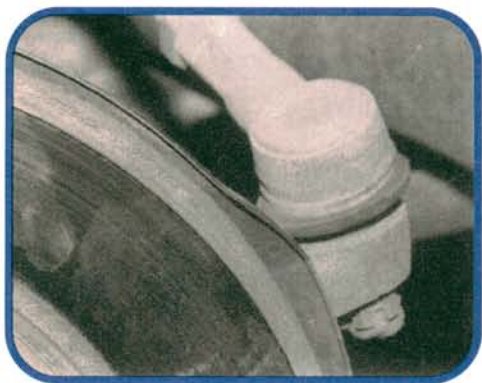
19

These cars seem to go through front brake pads much faster than you would expect for such a light car. Rotors can be removed without disassembling the hub and bearings. To prevent brake pulsations, index mark the parts, then make sure the hub and rotor mating surfaces are clean and smooth.



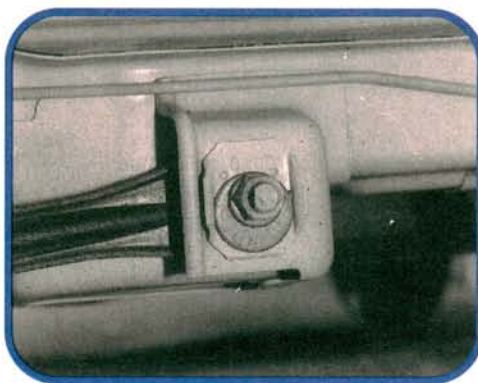
20

The sealed front wheel bearings were also mentioned as frequent early casualties. Bad bearings may make unusual noises that can be mistaken for internal transmission problems. The same part number is used for inner and outer bearings. A new inner seal is available for 1989-91 models.



21

Front toe is the only front wheel alignment adjustment, the other angles are preset. Right and left tie rod lengths must be equal after alignment. Unequal lengths will cause turning angle differences. The specification is 38 degrees for the inner wheel and 32 degrees for the outer wheel.



22

Rear toe is adjustable on all Metros and Swifts by moving this eccentric bolt on the lower trailing arm. Earlier Sprints have a beam axles and nonadjustable rear suspension. The rear wheel bearings on Sprints are also sealed and can't be repacked. Bearing nut torque is 80-120 Nm (68-86.5 ft-lb).