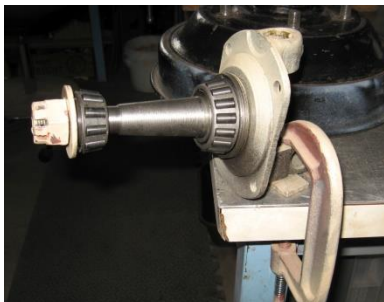


THE MODEL A TOOL BOX

WHEEL TEST TOOL

by Colin Lawson

One way to see if the A wheels are straight is to mount them on a front wheel spindle and spin slowly while measuring the amount of run-out at the rim. Here is a setup to test your Model A wheels on the workbench. When the tire is removed the wheel rim can be tested for straightness and for balance. Often the rims are rusted in the area of the valve stem since the metal stems tended to leak water. The rust would chip off causing the rim to be significantly lighter in that area. Some rims have been seen with up to eight ounces of imbalance and the area around the valve hole was very thin. The tool includes a front wheel hub, front spindle with bearings, washer and nut, and a 6" C-clamp. Securely clamp the spindle to the bench, clean the grease from some used bearings and lightly oil to ensure freedom of rotation. Install the brake drum assembly, turn on the nut so that it just eliminates the in-out play but not tight. Mount the rim with five nuts, place a stick on the bench so the end is close to the inner rim and rotate the rim to determine the amount of runout, less than 2 mm is usable and will not be too noticeable when the tire is on. To check for balance start the rim spinning slowly then let it stop, the heavy spot will be at the bottom, the lighter area at the top. Tape or clamp on some washers to the light area so the rim will stop at any location when balanced. Weigh the washers and clamps on a kitchen scale to determine the wheel weights to be added at the light area. As per a suggestion from a member, a series of thin stick-on weights can be added under the rubber rim band. A similar procedure can be used when balancing the tire and tube on the rim to avoid using adhesive wheel weights on the outside. For 1928-29 rims, stick on weights are used on the rear of the rim due to the rolled rim, for 1930-31 rims hammer on weights are used but are very obvious.



Using the same spindle and clamp with a front hub (no drum attached), and clamped onto a piece of pipe, this makes the perfect tool for spray painting wheel rims.

Originally published in The Radshell newsletter, February 2021