

# Hudsonotes

Column of Mechanical Miscellany  
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## Body Repairs and Adjustments (Part 4 of a series)

**TRUNK LATCHES ON 1948-50** models are about the same as on '47 and earlier Hudsons. Unlike those 1951 and up, they hold edge of lid at two points, and they permit the lid to be latched with or without locking it, as preferred. To latch, handle must be flipped upward ¼ turn, then down, after lid is closed. Latch adjustments are made mostly by bending the two linkage rods inside trunk lid (see body manual). As with car doors, the lid and its hinges should be adjusted first for a good fit. The two rubber wedge pieces (on edge of lid, at each latch) should also be in place, and rubber weather-strip should be in good condition (sometimes only the portion along lower edge needs replacement).

Note the springloaded clevis for latch, on body, at each side. Spring must hold clevis as far out and up as possible, or latch will not work properly. Bend or replace spring if necessary, and use a touch of heavy grease on parts when reassembling. Check to be sure that latches hold the two sides of trunk lid equally tight. Although any major correction will require bending of one linkage rod, a minor adjustment can often be made by loosening 3 or 4 bolts and moving center trunk handle assembly a bit to one side (enlarge bolt holes slightly with file if necessary). Also, one or more spacer pieces can be made of sheet metal, 1½ inches long, and perhaps ¾ inch wide, with a total thickness of about 1/32 inch or more, up to nearly ¼ inch, if needed. Spacer should be placed on the looser-fitting side, between clevis and edge of door frame, to hold the clevis slightly inward. This will tighten latch, and the spacer can be fastened using rubber trim cement or epoxy.

Most of these trunk handles, both the large and small types, have a built-in license lamp, designed to shine upward in "footlight" style. The bulb (#63) is replaceable from inside trunk lid, and a gasket seal keeps water out of glass; but occasionally rainwater may enter between the glass and the metal base, causing a small leak into trunk. If necessary, remove glass, and seal around top opening with non-hardening body putty (light-gray color preferred); or use windshield sealer. Some of these lights also have a small hole at bottom to illuminate trunk keyhole.

Check also for possible leakage between trunk lid and handle base. Most models use a rubber gasket here, but sometimes a bit of fill-in with black non-hardening body putty or rubber sealant may be needed. Check gaskets at taillights (and surface-mounted backup lights) as well. Sometimes a bit of

soft body putty is also needed at the mounting holes for "Hudson" trunk ornament, license plate bracket, etc.

**THE LARGE** horizontal Commodore trunk handle base casting is handsome but may also be somewhat fragile, particularly at its right side. If a good 1948-49 replacement piece is hard to find, one may be obliged to use a 1950 part, which is the same shape but without license lamp, and is somehow more often found broken. Lamp hole can be hand-cut in the top of this part, and the edges carefully finished smooth with a file; and then, on inner surface, two small screw holes should be drilled and tapped to hold retainer plate for glass and lamp socket.

The smaller Super/Pacemaker handle base has a steel reinforcement plate inside trunk lid; and perhaps a similar reinforcement would have been advisable for Commodore handles also, especially on coupés and convertibles. Possibly one can still be made to fit; or the large base can be reinforced somewhat by adding a washer of about 2½ inch diameter under the cup washer inside lid at each of the left-side mounting bolts (also use bolts slightly longer than original). No reinforcement should be added to the two bolts at right side.

The latch handle (large or small) is removed by loosening one nut inside trunk. On its shaft (inside base) is a coiled return spring, designed to help hold handle in the down position. Check to be sure this spring is well greased and not bent or broken, or unhooked at one end. It can be stretched slightly in length to help keep it in place.

The two latch rods should operate quietly (lid up or down), without scrapes or rattles. Ends should be well lubricated; and if desired a small homemade leather washer (which helps retain oil) may be added under the metal one at each end. If one rod scrapes slightly despite best adjustment efforts, it can be wrapped with wide plastic tape, or a suitable piece of hose or plastic tubing can be slipped over it.

**PREPARE NOW!**  
FOR THE WINTER MONTHS

COOLING SYSTEM  
CLEANED & CHECKED

MINOR ENGINE TUNE-UP  
SPARK PLUGS CLEANED and RE-GAPPED  
DISTRIBUTOR POINTS ADJUSTED and TIMING SET  
CARBURETOR and CLIMATIC CONTROL ADJUSTED  
FUEL PUMP SEDIMENT BOWL CLEANED  
AIR CLEANER CLEANED and RE-OILED

HUDSON ANTI-FREEZE  
ADDED

CHANGE TO WINTER  
LUBRICANT

HUDSON **SERVICE OF THE MONTH**

**TRUNK HINGES** on the these cars are the same right and left, and are adjustable from both the door and body ends. The body end was made longer (and with bolt pattern reversed) c. 1950 for added strength. Door end of hinge (unchanged) has a threaded tapping plate inside metal of lid for strength and easier adjustment. Along with checking adjustment of the hinges for proper

fit of trunk lid when closed, be sure that both of them are set parallel so that they do not put a twisting strain on trunk metal (or wear excessively around hinge pins) when the lid is raised and lowered. Abnormal strain may even cause a crack to form inside trunk lid, near hinge. This must be repaired by welding.

Most hinges c. 1948-49 have sheet-metal covers which are spot-welded in place. If these interfere when hinges are worked on, they can be bent aside, or better, carefully removed and then put back later using ¼ inch bolts, nuts, and washers like those on early '48 models. To break spotwelds with a minimum of damage to surrounding metal, a small hole may be drilled in the center of each one before chisel is used.

Trunk lid is held open by a combination of a coiled spring and two small levers which are built into each hinge assembly. Only a light spring is needed on sedan models, but a heavier one is required with the larger lids on coupés and convertibles. If trunk lid will not stay open as it should, one possible correction is to remove both hinges from car and wind each spring ½ turn tighter. Also, the action of both hinges must match so that the spring and small levers in each one move "over-center" exactly together as lid is opened. If they do not, it may be necessary to modify one hinge slightly, removing the rivet which holds small lever to door half of hinge, and enlarging the hole in this half to permit needed adjustment; and finally installing a small bolt (with a bushing or shoulder to fit hole in lever) in place of the rivet.

**TRUNK FLOORS** on Hudson stepdown cars are spacious, although the flat-mounted spare tire of 1948-51 is somewhat obtrusive. On 1952-54 models, a well was provided in the floor for vertical storage of tire, which necessitated changing muffler location from under trunk to a more conventional position farther forward.

The rear trunk floor is made with two reinforcing ribs, at left and near center, which help in supporting the fuel tank. In mid-1949 or so it was decided that some further reinforcement of trunk floor was desirable, probably more for added suppression of rumble or resonance than for sheer extra strength. A third rib, one about 2½ inches deep, was added to cars in production, under trunk floor at right, beside muffler and just beneath spare-tire bracket. It was spot-welded in place, and was not listed as a retrofit for '48/early '49 cars. For them, a "rear compartment floor reinforcement kit" was available, consisting of a steel plate (made with offset to match riser in trunk floor), along with bolts, nuts, and washers for installation.

Either or both of these reinforcements can still be added to an early stepdown Hudson, particularly if floor has weakened somewhat with age, or heavy loads are often carried in trunk. The third rib (from parts car, or homemade, about 29 inches long) can be drilled for bolt-on mounting, and a wide flat washer should be used on each bolt, inside trunk. The added stiffening is helpful whether

trunk floor is original, or has been repaired for rust damage. On cars factory-equipped with the third rib, check for possible small crack in floor metal near end welds; repair as necessary. If spare plate is available it can also be added to these cars. Use rust-proofing compound (or heavy grease) between floor metal and reinforcements.

The trunk mats on stepdown Hudsons were generally of rubber on Commodore and Hornet, and of a woven and/or padded material on the other models. If a spare mat is available, some owners may wish to use two trunk mats (preferably one of each kind), for better sound damping and cushioning of objects in trunk. However, moisture should not be allowed to collect under trunk mat (or under mats or carpets inside car). This should be checked occasionally, and floors dried out as necessary.

Sealing between trunk and rear seatback (and rear shelf) should be practically airtight. The spare tire and wheel (especially if horizontally mounted) should be bolted firmly in place; this also can add somewhat to rumble suppression.

**ONE CAUSE OF** floor and body rumble is a badly-fitting exhaust system. Muffler and pipes must have no leaks, and must hang from their rubber-strap mountings without touching floor or frame directly at any point. Also, the tailpipe at rear (which was an integral part of many original Hudson mufflers) should be at least long enough to end in line with outer edge of rear bumper. If it is too short, the exhaust note will resound against trunk floor under some conditions.

A chrome-plated exhaust pipe tip, preferably of plain turned-down shape, is a desirable accessory, even if it is not of exact original Hudson design. Along with being a dress-up item, the extension tip helps to protect rear bumper chrome from hot gases, and it also helps to direct exhaust sound downward and away from car. Chrome on tip seldom lasts more than one season, it is true, especially if there is no inner metal shield; but when the part becomes shabby it can often be covered with another exhaust tip one size larger. Chrome on the new outer tip will thus be somewhat protected, and will usually last for several years.

Evidently no add-on reinforcement parts from factory were needed for the passenger floor area of these Hudsons. A pressed-in channel for slight extra stiffening of front floor and toeboard riser on either side was added c. mid-1949.

**SOLID CONSTRUCTION** of body is of course not the only factor in providing a quiet ride. It is interesting to note that the 1948 Hudson stepdowns (like several Brand X body designs when new) actually had to be weakened at several points during the first year of production, apparently in the interest of extra noise suppression. Underhood, one diagonal brace can be seen on each side, extending from cowl area down to front frame. Although on early '48 cars these braces were simply welded in place,

all later ones had them bolted on, with lower end joined to frame by a heavy rubber strap or dampener pad. On an old car, these straps may become hard and brittle with age (or damaged by engine oil), and so should be checked and replaced if necessary. If straps from a parts car are no better, good replacements can be cut from a scrap tire (ordinary 4-ply bias type). The same tire can be used to make replacement straps for original Hudson exhaust pipe hangers (install with fine-thread bolts and self-locking nuts if matching rivets are not at hand). Rubber pad which fits on the large bolt underneath radiator cradle can also be made in this way.

A flat metal brace under dash extends from cowl area to clamp for steering column on most full-size Hudson stepdowns, usually also supporting wire harness, circuit breaker, etc. On early '48 cars this brace was solidly bolted at both ends; but thereafter it had a small dampener strap or pad, about  $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$  inches, inserted at column end. Dampener was made of rubber material similar to that used for front mud flaps (an rear apron) on these cars; but usually it has hardened and cracked with age. If matching material is not available, a replacement strap can be made from flat rubber belting (if not too heavy). Install using original small bolts and self-locking nuts.

**HOOD OF CAR** normally does not fit as snugly as doors or trunk lid, but it must align properly with cowl, fenders, and grille; and it must open and close easily. Instructions for most needed hood adjustments are given in the Hudson Body Service Manual. Before adjusting, be sure that hood hinges, latch, prop arms, and release cable are all well lubricated.

The hood hinges on Hudson stepdowns (as on many other cars) are of the compound type with two unequal levers, made so that as hood starts to open, it also moves up and away from cowl at rear. Geometry of right and left hinges should be alike as hood is raised and lowered; adjust hinge position slightly if necessary, checking also for any bent or damaged parts (including the two coil springs), and possibly enlarging slots in hood, or in cowl end of hinge, slightly with a file for more adjustment.

The hood latch, and a small rubber wedge piece on each front fender, help to center the hood when closed, but they should not be needed to force hood into a centered position. Sometimes hood latch, in front tie panel, may be slightly off-center (especially if worn). Centering can be corrected by removing latch plate and enlarging its screw holes to slotted shape with file, thus permitting some lateral adjustment. The latch plunger (on hood) allows vertical adjustment; check to be sure that it is not bent or loose. Rubber bumper buttons for hood (on tie panel) are also adjustable for height, but sometimes the center one must be ground thinner (or omitted) for best fit.

The Hudson stepdown models still used hood webbing (on cowl) for a noise-free fit.

Webbing is of beaded type, with cord in edges. It can be lubricated with Door-Ease wax (clean first with solvent if needed). If webbing must be replaced—or perhaps thickness doubled in spots—small sheet-metal screws can be used in place of original retaining rivets.

At front, check operation of secondary or "safety" catch for hood. It must release easily, yet hold securely to avoid any possibility of hood accidentally flying open when it has not been fully latched.

(Next time: interior and upholstery repairs.)

### HERE IS ONE FOR EVERY MECHANIC

Not only is this owner a Hudson enthusiast, he must also be credited with being a very capable mechanical diagnostician. Living in a section of the country that is a considerable distance from his nearest Hudson Dealer, he writes the following letter:

"In September you were kind enough to send me a procedure manual to enable me to overcome difficulty I was having with my 1951 Hudson six.

The difficulty was that the car stalled every time I made a quick stop. It may interest you to know what caused this as it is something which may occur again.

When coming to a quick stop, the motor has a tendency to shift forward a very small fraction of an inch against the rubber mounts and when the wiring group which is held to the bulkhead on a level with the top of the cylinder block is pulled forward by the engine, it caused the insulation to be cut on the sharp edge of the clip. This shorted out the ignition. This seemed to be a difficult thing to find as no amount of testing would uncover it when the car was not in motion and the cut through the insulation was so small that it easily escaped visual inspection. The car now performs excellently.

Thank you very kindly for your service and cooperation."

### HE'S INTERESTED IN HELPING OTHERS

Edward Crane, tester for O'Donnell Motor Sales Inc., a Chicago Hudson dealer, writes:

"We have experienced a condition in the 480-490-500 and Series "A" cars in that the transmission has a tendency to hang in second gear: Found the cause of this to be due to the companion flange nut at the transmission being loosened up allowing the main shaft to have excessive end play also causing the speedometer drive gear to turn on the main shaft.

We have eliminated speedometer complaints caused by this condition, also the gear shift difficulty as well, by simply tightening the universal joint companion flange nut on the transmission: 90 to 100 ft. lbs. torque is correct."

**ROTATING TIRES** is just as important as proper air inflation in order to obtain the maximum tire life. Few owners realize this or do the work themselves.

Every Service Salesman should stress this point, particularly in view of the fact that the tires are becoming more expensive and winter wear on tires is most severe. This is just another one of those services that many owners will appreciate and gladly pay for.

HUDSON SERVICE MERCHANDISER