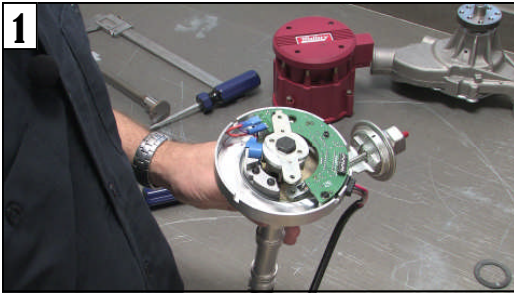
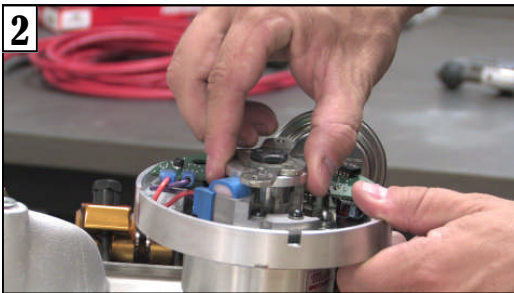


Cheat Sheet: Finding Correct Distributor Depth



1 Pull the Cap and Rotor: The point of checking distributor depth is to make sure the distributor's timing gear isn't bottoming out against the gear on the camshaft or the oil pump driveshaft. Begin by pulling off the distributor cap and rotor—and the advance weights if necessary—so that you can reach the horizontal plate that's mounted directly to the distributor shaft.



2 Check the Play: Install the distributor in the engine without the gasket. Make sure it is fully engaged with the oil pump driveshaft. Now, hold the distributor housing steady with one hand and, with the other, see if you can move the shaft up and down. If it is bottomed out, you won't be able to wiggle it at all. But if you can get a small amount of movement, you should be fine.

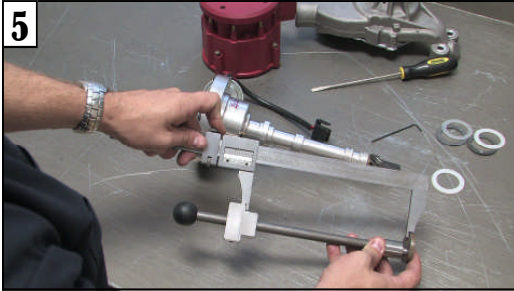


3 Shims: If the distributor gear is bottomed out, the solution is to raise the entire assembly by placing shims between the distributor's collar and the mounting boss on the intake. The shims (left) are usually made from nylon or plastic and won't compress like a standard gasket (right). You can usually get them from the same place you purchased your distributor. Add just enough to get a small amount of play in the distributor shaft. Don't try to achieve the same result by stacking gaskets; they will compress over time.

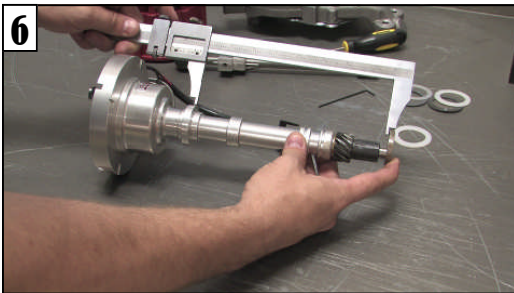


4 Another Option: This tool from Goodson allows you to set your distributor depth precisely. Begin by installing it in the engine just like you would a distributor. Now slide the collar down until it sits on the intake's mounting boss, and lock it in position with the set screw.

Cheat Sheet: Finding Correct Distributor Depth



Measure Once: Pull the checking tool out and install the end cap. Now measure the distance from the top of the end cap to the bottom of the collar. You can use either a large pair of calipers or a ruler. Just make sure the collar doesn't slip.



Measure Twice: Next, install the end cap on the end of your distributor and measure from the top of the end cap (just like before) to the bottom of the mounting collar on the distributor's housing. This distance should be just slightly shorter than your measurement on the checking tool. If the distance is the same or longer on the distributor, add a shim or two.



Better Lubrication: This step isn't necessary, but it can help improve the life of your timing gear. This is especially true if you are using a roller camshaft which requires a bronze distributor gear. (Those are usually only good for 20,000 miles or so.) Use a triangle file to cut a 0.030-inch deep groove in the lower portion of the housing. I cut this one on an angle so the file could sit in the hollow between the teeth on the gear. Once installed in the engine, this will allow a steady stream of oil to get to the gear, which normally only receives splash oiling.



Bolt It Up: Once you've determined the correct depth, you are ready to re-attach the rotor and cap and install the distributor. Don't forget to use your gasket this time around.