



# Why Should I Have My Timing Belt Checked?

Quick Facts about Timing Belt Check-ups	
How often?	Follow the schedule in your owner's manual.
Benefits?	Catch wearing belts before they break, preventing potentially severe engine damage and costly repairs.



When your timing belt breaks, your engine will stop. You could, however, be in more trouble than simply being stranded on the road. Depending on how your engine is designed, and a good element of luck, your engine could suffer damage ranging from a few bent valves to being completely ruined.

When we talk about timing belts, we can break all engines down into two groups - free running and interference. In a free running engine, there is enough room for the piston to make a complete cycle without hitting the valve, even if it is completely open. In an interference engine, things are a little more closely timed. When the valve is open, the piston will collide with it, potentially damaging the valves, cylinders, and head.

So, do you need to worry about this? On older Volkswagens and Audis, the standard eight-valve engines are free-running, and the sixteen-valve engines and diesel engines are interference-type designs. On newer Volkswagens and Audis, however, even the standard 2.0 L engine can be an interference engine. This depends on how fast you are going when the belt breaks.

With this in mind, it makes a lot of sense to have the timing belt checked regularly, and to have it replaced when the manufacturer specifies, regardless of wear. By following the manufacture's schedule, you can be confident that your timing belt won't leave you stranded, or in need of a new engine.