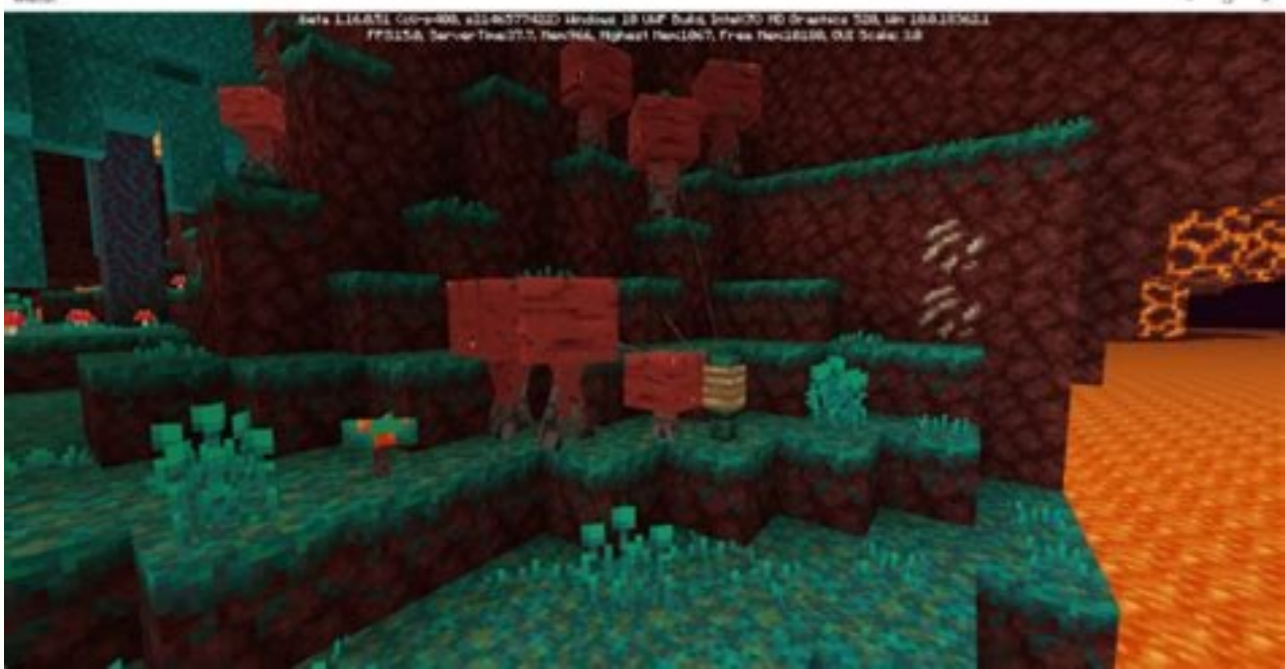


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Trucks Ram Confirms Midsize Pickup Concept In Development LEAKED: The New BMW M2 Better Be Fast Because It Ain't Pretty Test Drive Driven: 2022 Land Rover Range Rover Embarrasses Other Luxury SUVs Electric Vehicles GM To Build New EVs At The Home Of A Dead American Automaker Industry News Hertz Sued After Customers Held At Gunpoint By Cops Cover Allegedly Stolen Cars Offbeat Kentucky Will Change Its Name In Honor Of The Ford Super Duty I haunt quite a few automotive forums and online car groups these days. One theme, in particular, that's been floating around since the days of mailing letters to the editors of Sport Compact Car still persists — somebody's just bought an old Make Model Whatever and wants to know what mods to do first. I'm happy to answer that for absolutely everybody: Start by fixing whatever's broken. Another common refrain from old (wise) heads in the car scene is that "the best mod is the driver mod," meaning you should improve your driving skills before adding horsepower. Well, yeah, that statement has a lot of merit, but it's also a little unsatisfying. Building driving skill takes time and if you want to go to a proper performance school, it takes a lot of money too. So yes, you should absolutely take every opportunity to become a better driver. But that journey will span your entire car-owning career. And I totally understand the excitement of picking up a new-to-you car and immediately wanting to tinker with it. It's very satisfying to put your own hands and mark on your machine, after all. You want to start wrenching right now! I hear you. I've also been to a lot of car meets in my 30-odd years on this Earth, and I've seen a lot of vehicles with shiny new wheels and lowering springs paired with cracked engine mounts and steering bushings that have the suppleness of a tumbleweed. See also: Cold-air intakes running right next to cracked vacuum lines. Or a knock-off racing seat that somebody's strapped into with a floppy seat belt that doesn't retract properly. If you really want to improve the way your old car drives, it pays to start by building a good baseline. And you do that by replacing tired old bushings, mounts, and hoses before adding bling or power. All those soft parts that you can't always easily see connect critical components of your steering, drivetrain, and your engine's respiratory system. And if the car you just bought was under \$10,000, over 10 years old, or both, I promise, years of heat cycling and vibrations will have taken their toll on those things. The annoying thing about doing bushings and rubber lines is that they don't look very cool, and often are quite physically laborious to replace. But the upshot is that you will almost definitely feel a noticeable improvement in your old car's performance just by bringing that stuff back up to factory spec. Speaking of factory spec, I do recommend sticking with that when it comes to bushings. You'll find plenty of people claiming that aftermarket polyurethane bushings improve a car's responsiveness, and they often do, but the tradeoff in harshness is brutal and rarely worth it. So yeah — I'm not trying to shame anybody who wants to mod into just doing a lame stock restoration. On the contrary, I hope my advice helps more people build cooler cars that last longer. I've been there myself, wondering why my car drives kind of crappily despite riding on expensive performance tires. Trust me when I tell you that the difference between riding around with your engine and transmission clinging to their mounting points with ancient rubber versus fresh factory rubber bushings is absolutely immense even if you're barely making 150 horsepower. A better-maintained car is a smoother car, a smoother car runs longer, and guess what? Once you do add those sweet tires and coilovers, they're going to multiply the car's performance even more once they're supported by good bushings and related pieces. So if I personally just picked up an old car on the cheap, and wanted to get the most out of it for the least money, this is the order of operations I'd generally go through: Tires Tires that are cracked, worn, or just old are not only detrimental to your car's performance, but they can actually be pretty dangerous. You don't necessarily need high-performance tires on a Craigslist car but you should make sure whatever you have is at least safe to drive on. Filters and Fluids On a younger car or something with great service records, you might not need to replace every single fluid. But on a random four-figure pickup, I'd recommend changing out every filter and fluid including what's in the transmission and differentials with nice new stuff. Unless of course, you've bought something with a catastrophic leak, in which case, fix that first. But old automotive fluid can get air and water in it. Air and water reduce responsiveness and increase rot. Air and water bad. Vacuum Lines and Hoses Vacuum lines are a big deal on '80s and '90s cars, and I can't tell you how many weird issues (car idles oddly, hesitation under acceleration, etc.) that I've fixed just by replacing the vacuum lines these old cars use to breathe. And that took me a long time to learn. Those lines often "look fine," but a hairline crack can really screw up the way your car runs. Silicone tubing's cheap, just replace it all. Bushings Chunky pieces of rubber sit between many of your steering components. They live a hard life, and after a decade or so of being beaten up they might not be as taut as they're supposed to be. An experienced and trustworthy mechanic should be able to tell you if your bushings really need to be replaced or not. They do last a long time, but not forever. And even if they look OK... if they're very old, there's a high likelihood that they're causing some slop in your car's behavior. Engine, Transmission, and Driveline Mounts Your car can be driving pretty much fine on janky driveline mounts. But if they are indeed bad, once you replace them, you won't believe you're in the same car afterwards. These chunks of rubber do way more work than we give them credit for, especially more advanced fluid-filled hydraulic ones. Replacing the motor and transmission mounts in my '84 300ZX made the car feel about 500 pounds lighter, I swear, it was that much smoother. Seatbelts Another thing that amateur tuners, myself included, sometimes forget to give proper credence to is automotive safety. Unfortunately, older cars are inherently (generally) far less safe than new stuff but we can mitigate this by making sure the safety systems that are in place are doing the best job they can. Does your seatbelt dangle when you unclick it? Does it have to be force-fed back into your B-pillar? Yeah, you might want to try cleaning it (Google around for tips) or simply getting it rebuilt. It's often a pain to remove them, but a seatbelt rebuild is typically not terribly expensive and a taut harness will make you more comfortable while improving the odds of surviving an automotive brutality. Anyway, I hope some of those tips inspire you to let your car live its best life. I wish I'd known this stuff 15 years ago before I started throwing expensive sparky parts on shitbox cars that were rotted from the inside out! A mod (short for modification) is a modified version of a video game made by altering the original or vanilla code. Video game enthusiasts use modding to fix bugs, add levels, or invent a completely new game. This extends the game's life, replay value, and public interest. Some mods are so well done that they have become available for purchase or have been released as brand new games. Because of the popularity of modding, developers began releasing a game's open-source software which allows users to make and distribute their mods. Many games also come with modding tools. Types of mods Total conversion mod describes making such drastic modifications to the graphics and gameplay, that the original game is unrecognizable. An example would be the extremely popular total conversion of Half-Life into Black Mesa. Overhaul mods are focused on giving the game completely new graphics, but not changing it so much that the original is unrecognizable. Add-on is typically a smaller mod where a new character, weapon, map, or level is added to a game. Unofficial patch refers to a mod that fixes a bug not addressed in an official patch released by the game developer. Graphical art mod focuses on upgrading the original game's graphics quality by adding high-definition textures, changing the color balance, or modifying the game's appearance. Popular games to mod Minecraft Skyrim Half-Life Grand Theft Auto What? How to decide which car is right for you? A Complete Guide to Warning Lights on Your Car Dashboard What the various warning symbols mean Is Your Mechanic Cheating You? 10 Things to Look Out For All you need to know to ensure you don't get ripped off 4WD Vs. AWD - Knowing the Difference How they differ, which is better, and which you should buy. It'll make you cry. The US has no shortage of imports for gearheads to choose from. That said, we always want what we can't have, like every single Nissan Skyline. What's worse is that sometimes when we do get what we want the car is modified, meaning not as awesome as it is overseas. This is sometimes due to different emission and safety regulations. Other times it's a business decision. Regardless, it's pretty crappy, especially for those who waited so patiently for these cars to come stateside. Here are five cars that were seriously modified upon arriving in the US. Mercedes-Benz First up we have the Mercedes-Benz 190e Cosworth 2.3-liter. Compared to its four year run in Germany beginning in 1983, the US version only saw two years. 1986-87. With those two years came some pretty hefty engine changes. Mercedes and Cosworth teamed up to make the initial engine, and gave it 185 horsepower with 10.5:1 compression and four valves per cylinder. With much lower compression (9.7:1) and various emissions attachments, the US version ended up making 167 horsepower when all was said and done. The engine was weaker overall, producing just a 6800 rpm redline as opposed to Germany's 7200. It still looked absolutely badass, however. Next up we have the Subaru WRX. The JDM spec WRX debuted in 1992 packing a mighty turbocharger. It had twin viscous differentials and all-wheel drive. It came with a 2.0-liter boxer four-cylinder engine, with 237 horsepower and a five-second 0-60 mph time. It also was able to complete a quarter mile in 13 seconds. The JDM STi version came out in 1993 with 247 horsepower and a 0-60 mph time of 4.7 seconds. The US' first WRX came in 2002. It had 227 horsepower out of its 2.0-liter engine, so in other words the US waited ten years to get a weaker engine, due probably to emissions. Apparently the US was fine with these changes, as Car and Driver put it on its top ten list for 2002-2003. Injustice prevailed though, as not until 2004 would the US get its very own STi. One of the primary differences between the USDM WRX engine and the JDM engine is the fact that its closed deck, which is much stronger than the US' open deck. It won't warp as easily so it's better for boost and more robust. Aside from being right hand drive, the JDM and USDM WRXs are almost the same, save for minor differences like the front grill. The E36 BMW M3 is the most criminal on the list. Produced from 1992-99, it wasn't even supposed to come out in the US. In Germany, its engine, based on the M50 platform, got individual throttle bodies and BMW's VANOS valve timing system. All this gave the car 240 horsepower out of 3.0 liters. After a rigorous letter campaign and no doubt much deliberation the M3 finally came to the US in 1995 but was altered to be without all of that awesome engine technology. In order to sell appropriately at a price based on how much it would cost to manufacture, the US got the older, more basic M50. This didn't make a difference for performance numbers. The US version made the same amount of horsepower as Europe's 1992 M3. It was popular though, as almost the same amount of cars were made in the US as in Europe but in half the time. The US might have gotten the E36 M3 in 1995, with the same specs as the 1992 Euro-spec version, but by that time the Eurospec had evolved. In 1995, the European M3 got the 3.2-liter engine, producing over 300 horsepower and a six-speed transmission. Sure the US got the 3.2-liter engine eventually, but was stiffed the extra power. The US 3.2-liter still made 240 horsepower. Fourth down this list is the Evo. Yes the US did get the Evo VIII, but it took more than 10 years for it to happen. Before the Evo VIII got to the US there had already been seven other generations, with the car winning rally races since gen two. The Evo VIII wasn't altered for performance, admittedly, but for a time the US was denied a rally car in the form of this twin scroll turbocharged rally sedan, bred from generations of a race car tuned specifically for rally racing. It certainly is a great injustice, especially considering the WRX came out three years prior. The only difference between the two versions is a tune, as the JDM Evo makes 300 horsepower, where the US' makes 290. The final (and perhaps most appalling example) is the 1988 Nissan 180SX. In the US the 180SX came out under the 240SX badge in 1989 with a 2.4-liter inline-four, producing around 130 horsepower. The JDM-spec 180SX came with either a naturally aspirated 1.8-liter inline-four or a different option. The naturally aspirated engine made just about as much power as the 2.4-liter unit. However, the JDM 180SX received an additional option in the form of a turbocharged 2.0-liter CA18DET engine producing 174 horsepower. This engine wasn't sold in the states, but it is illegal to have, at least in California. Thanks to emissions regulations the engine will not pass a legitimate smog test. Crueler realizations have never been met. In fact the 240SX in the US never got its turbocharger. The only difference the US' 2.4-liter engine ever saw was the switch from single overhead cam (SOHC) to dual overhead cam (DOHC) for the 1991 model. The DOHC engine was kept until 1998 when the car was discontinued. Mercedes-Benz



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