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**Creaking sound from undercarriage: any ideas?**

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07-10-2001, 01:57 PM

#1



**Mervyn**  
Registered User

Join Date: Jan 2001  
Location: Singapore  
Posts: 267

Hi everyone,

I'm beginning to hear some new noises again. There is a "creaking" sound (seems to come from the undercarriage) whenever I turn the steering wheel in any of the two directions, and again when the wheel is turned back to center. Only heard upon doing tighter turns, especially when negotiating tight bends in multi-storey carparks.

It is a low frequency kind of creaking, very much like how an old door would sound when you open it slowly. And it seems to come from only the front.

Any ideas to help me out? Thanks!

Mervyn  
1983 W126 (280SEL)



07-10-2001, 03:22 PM

#2

**Mike Murrell**  
Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2000  
Posts: 1,592

Mervyn:

Noises are tough to diagnose sight unseen and everyone has their own idea about describing a noise. You'll likely receive a number of ideas on this post, so I'll start it off with my 2 cents. You mention "low frequency" in your post. That part of your description sorta matches a problem I recently discovered on my 126 - collapsed motor mounts.

On mine, the passenger side mount is in plain sight - can't say about a 280. Check it out.

Mike Murrell  
1991 300-SEL - Model 126  
M103 - SOHC  
"Fräulein"



07-10-2001, 04:40 PM

#3

BlackE55  
Guest

Posts: n/a

I get a creaking sound coming from under the car when I sit in it -- and no, I'm not heavy either, 185 lbs. 😊

It usually happens after the car has sat for for more than 8 hrs or so.  
Sounds like it's coming from under driver's side area.



07-10-2001, 09:06 PM

#4



**ymsin**  
Driver, Mercedes-Benz

Join Date: Feb 2001  
Location: Malaysia  
Posts: 1,645

I have this sound too.

The groaning sound is most imminent when driving on cold. I could hear the brakes depressing and the low frequency groaning sound. The mechanic reckons its the steering pump - but I can't see the connection when the brakes are depressed.

Then, the screech happens when its been running hot and when steering to the left. Steering right is fine. It doesn't happen all the time but enough to make me wonder in discomfort. The mechanic said its because of a new fan belt (over a year old?), and thus its likely the tension when heat expands the belt. Again, I am wondering whats the nexus.



... Kerry

126 tailed by a 203, 129 leading the pack.



07-10-2001, 09:15 PM

#5



**ymsin**  
Driver, Mercedes-Benz

Join Date: Feb 2001  
Location: Malaysia  
Posts: 1,645

**Another one ...**

Since we're on sounds here - I have another sound that comes on when I drive above 110kn/p. Its like coming from the front right speaker side, but when I checked the speakers for any loose screws - they were fine.

Opened the bonnet and found some loose wires hanging out - which I taped and secured - but the high pitched screw-loose-like sound still comes on.

Bother.



... Kerry

126 tailed by a 203, 129 leading the pack.



07-10-2001, 10:22 PM

#6

BlackE55  
Guest

Posts: n/a

When the brakes are applied? Couldn't that be a sign of worn rotors? Have them inspected and maybe they only need to be turned. Do you feel anything through the brake pedal? Pulsing etc...



07-11-2001, 07:27 PM

#7

EADG  
Guest

Posts: n/a

Creaking sound when you turn the steering wheel eh?

I had the exact same problem a couple months ago. I asked around and everybody said ball joints, which sounded expensive. I called a local independant and explained the noises I was encountering and he said the same thing - ball joints. UH-OH.

I took the car into the garage and the mechanic jacked up the front right, he then pushed and pulled and twisted the right wheel looking for play, none found. Did the same on the left side and everything cheched out... no play in the wheel so the ball joints were good. (excuse the lack of technical language, I'm a beginner DIY'er)

Turns out that the ball joints are sealed and this seal can allow water to seep into the ball and socket, forming rust and resulting in the noise you hear. The fix was fast and simple - poke a hole, insert tube, fill with lubricant.

Since that visit I've heard the very occasional creak and groan when driving slow and turning the wheel.

Focus your attention on the ball joints, perhaps one of the other members can tell you exactly how to go about checking them for wear...

EADG  
'91 300E  
Cheers for now.



07-12-2001, 12:33 AM

#8



**Mervyn**  
Registered User

Join Date: Jan 2001  
Location: Singapore  
Posts: 267

I know trying to get advice pertaining to noise problems over the web is kinda like asking for the sky, but at least I know where to start off.

EADG,

I am suspecting the ball joints too! Must be something that only makes noise when turning the steering at sharper angles. Other than that, straight runs are very quiet. I'll go check on that. And yea, I have heard that castor ball joint jobs aren't cheap! 😞

Mike,  
Motor mounts = engine mounts? But if that's the cause, why would it only make noise when turning?  
Hmmm.....

Any more ideas?

Mervyn  
1983 W126 (280SEL)



07-12-2001, 02:08 AM

#9

georgedaman  
Guest

Posts: n/a

i know you heard the balljoint things already but have you had the LOWER LOWER balljoints checked?....they don't necessarily have to have a play..but it could mean that the grease is gone on away or the other...even if the sleeve is not cracked.. what u can do is tell ur mechanic to lift the car push the sleeve back up very carefully try not to damage it and spray some WD 40 on it..into it....if the sound stops...you are lucky and know what the problem is...either try to feel it up with proper grease..or change the balljoint..hopefully this will narrow down your search.



07-15-2001, 04:53 AM

#10

EADG  
Guest

Posts: n/a

Mervyn  
How did things turn out? have you had the noise diagnosed by a MB tech or other?

I was pulling in to my garage the other day, had the sun roof and windows open, and I turned the wheel and I heard the creaking noise from a few months ago. It's loud!

Seems to me the poking of the seals and squirting of the oil is just a temporary fix.... mind you the lub the mech put in was pretty light, it came from a spray can. ( heavier than WD-40 is all I know for certain) I'll be looking into a way to add a heavier lub into the socket tomorrow.

Pristine 124 + creaking front end noise = unwanted stares.

Cheers for now.  
Eadg



07-15-2001, 01:02 PM

#11

[Mike Murrell](#)   
Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2000  
Posts: 1,592

Mervyn:

My W126 was making a low-pitched "crunch" kinda noise when making right hand turns and when taking off from a dead stop. The front engine mounts had collapsed. Replaced the two fronts and the rear and things are quiet again.

Mike Murrell  
1991 300-SEL - Model 126

M103 - SOHC  
"Fräulein"



07-15-2001, 09:37 PM

#12



**Mervyn**  
Registered User

Join Date: Jan 2001  
Location: Singapore  
Posts: 267

Hi guys,

Thanks for your suggestions. I will drop by the workshop sometime this week, and will get the mech to check especially on those areas you guys mentioned, the balljoints, lower balljoints, engine mounts etc.

Will let you guys know the outcome once I'm done, hopefully it wouldnt cost me a bomb for the repairs! 😊

Thanks again.

Mervyn  
1983 W126 (280SEL)



07-15-2001, 09:58 PM

#13

**jeffsr**

Registered User

Join Date: Jan 2000  
Location: New Bedford, MA USA  
Posts: 1,583

Mervyn, this noise can also come from the struts. The lower end is mounted to the steering knuckle and the upper end of the strut piston is mounted to the body. When the wheels are turned, these parts move in relation to each other. A worn or brittle strut piston seal can produce creaking type of sounds.

---

Jeff Lawrence  
1989 300e  
2000 Dodge Grand Caravan SE  
No matter what you fix, there will always be something else to fix..  
"Warranty" is just another way of postponing the inevitable.



07-16-2001, 12:56 AM

#14



**Mervyn**  
Registered User

Join Date: Jan 2001  
Location: Singapore  
Posts: 267

#### **Update: Unable to find source of sound**

Hi everyone,

Finally got down to the mech to have him take a look at the car. Went for a test drive around a couple of blocks, and put the car through situations (tight turns) most likely to generate \*that\* groaning noise. It played up a bit every now and then, but because it came on intermittently, the mech was unable to trace the source.

Back to the workshop. He visually checked the lower ball joints (no leaking, no tear) and engine mounts (looked OK). I should have asked him to lift the car and push back the sleeve as suggested by georgedaman, but it slipped my mind.

Is it possible for the grease inside the ball/socket to dry up even if the balljoint looked perfectly OK?

Also, Jeff, what specifically does your "struts" refer to?

Meanwhile, I'm probably getting a second opinion. And this time, I hope to get the mech to check it the way you guys suggested. Any more inputs before I make another trip down to the workshop?

Thanks..... 😊

Mervyn  
1983 W126 (280SEL)

[Edited by Mervyn on 07-15-2001 at 11:59 PM]



07-16-2001, 01:04 AM

#15



**Mervyn**  
Registered User

Join Date: Jan 2001  
Location: Singapore  
Posts: 267

**On another note.....**

Jeff,  
I like that quote of yours!

Mervyn



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