

Adjusting Headlights is Easy!

By Suzi Robinson

Recently, while on a tour, our group drove our Model T's to supper and when we walked out of the restaurant darkness had settled in. Model T headlights are not as bright as modern cars, and we all know it, but sometimes we get caught out after dark and we must safely make it back to our destination.

Our car was the lead car and my husband was driving. Our headlights were so weak that he had trouble seeing the edge of the road. It took both of us to drive and locate the edge of the pavement. The reflection in the windshield did not help either. Naturally, I told him that he needs to buy some new lights. There was no comment.

When we got home I found his Model T Service manual, read the portion on headlights, and suspected the headlights might be out of focus and not properly aimed.

The results were outstanding and the fix was simple and easy. Follow these few steps and you can improve the headlight efficiency on your Model T Ford!

1. On any flat surface step off 25 feet from a wall- put down a mark.
2. On the wall, put a mark 28-32 inches from the floor. I found 2 different references in 2 different resources. Research the year model of your T and mark accordingly. Actually, the light pattern is so fuzzy that a couple of inches is irrelevant, from my point of view.
3. Mark the center on the wall indicator, then mark 14" either side of center (Fig. A).

Fig. A

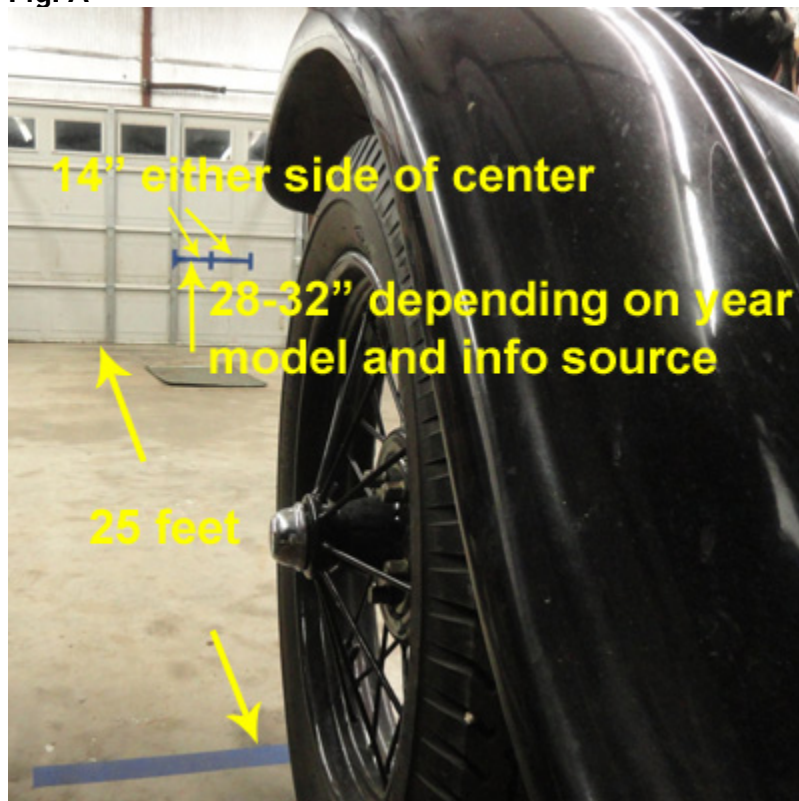


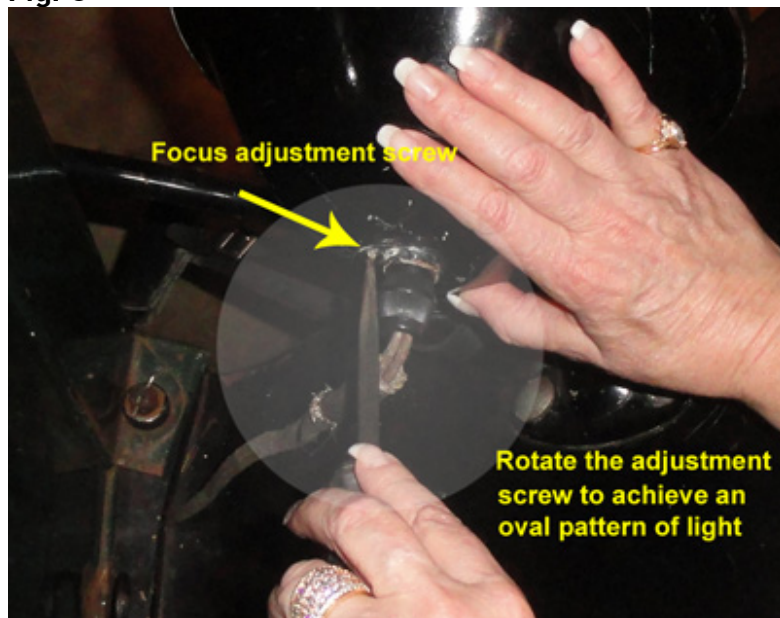
Fig. C



4. Next, disassemble the headlight, thoroughly clean the lens, reflector, and the socket (Fig. C). The socket must easily slide in the socket tube and the reflectors must be shiny- if not replace them.
5. Reassemble the headlight, mount on car.
6. Line the center of the T (radiator) up with the center mark on your wall. (Fig. A.)

7. In darkness, turn the switch to ON (bright). Cover the driver's side headlight with your husband's raincoat like I did. The light pattern should be a concentrated oval- not a large spread out circular pattern. If your's is like the one on the right (Fig. B), you need to FOCUS the light pattern by turn the adjusting screw (Fig. C) on back of the headlamp, which adjusts the socket in and out of the tube as you turn, thus focusing the pattern to a concentrated oval (Fig. D).
8. Once both lights are properly focused the light concentration must be aligned so that the top of the oval is even with the mark on the wall and 14" off center, depending on which side is being aimed- see photo for details. The car I adjusted was a 1926 Coupe and the brackets connect to a bar that is rounded where the lamp meets the bar, which makes alignment simple. On older cars the headlamp bracket must actually be bent to align the headlamp according to Ford specifications. My husband will have to do the bending on our 1921 Depot Hack.

Fig. C



Finished- ready to drive



This procedure is simple and can be done in a short amount of time, thereby improving your driving vision at night.

Fig. B

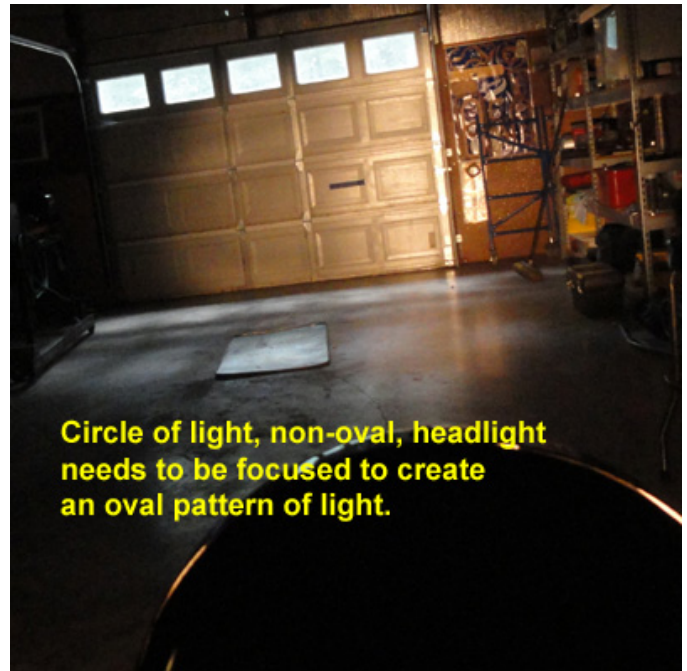


Fig. D

