

SNAPSHOT

USE MAGNETS TO FASTEN WHEELS TO YOUR MODEL CAR

REGARDLESS OF HOW THE WHEELS ARE ATTACHED — poly-caps, metal axles or rivets, or styrene plastic — you can modify your scale model car kit to use magnets instead. Mounting wheels this way allows you to swap between models or use optional wheel/tire combos.

By Mark Jones

The wheel mounting system for this Pontiac Firebird Trans Am is a common stub axle that a cap trapped in a two-piece wheel fits over. It can be easily modified to use a magnet for attachment. All you'll need is a metal bottle cap, snips, sanding sticks, superglue, and four rare earth magnets — one for each wheel.



First, take your metal bottle cap and cut a strip from it as wide as the diameter of the axle. Then, cut it into squares — four of them to be exact.



Here, the driver's side axle stub on the front crossmember was sanded down to compensate for the 0.010-inch thickness of the square of bottle cap and the 1mm thickness of the rare earth magnet. Superglue the metal square to the stub and round the corners with 320-grit sandpaper until the wheel cap fits smoothly.



Make similar changes to the rear axle. Here, the driver's side has the piece of metal installed and the passenger side is stock. On this model, all four wheels are the same, so the measurements at all four corners are, too.



Superglue the magnets inside the wheel caps. To accomplish this, drill a small hole in the end of the cap. Add a drop of superglue from the outside after the magnet is inserted into the cap and resting flat inside. Now, finish your wheel as per the instructions. **FSM**