

# Car Maintenance 101: Diagnosing Your Car's Steering Problems



**Note to Reader 1:** As you may have already surmised based on my previous posts, most suspension problems aren't really suspension issues but rather automotive symptoms of transmission or tire protection troubles. This is why it pays for you to pay close attention to your ride's movement and the differences in performance that you may experience when one of your auto systems' operations are compromised. Since we've basically covered suspension problems, the following are some of the most common steering problems you may encounter as you drive your ride.

Before anything, a quick introduction:

Your vehicle's steering system is designed to let you shift lanes or turn effectively as you drive. The steering wheel is basically connected by a series of auto parts to your wheels, that's why each time you turn your steering wheel, your front wheels turn as well. The moment you experience difficulties turning your steering wheel, or if your car keeps moving in a straight line even after you've turned your steering wheel to its limits, then you've got a rather grave steering problem. Read on to find out the possible causes behind your steering trouble.

**If you're having difficulties steering or turning, particularly when your vehicle is slowing down...** You shouldn't wait for the complete breakdown of your steering mechanism before you start worrying about its condition. In driving school, you're taught to slow down when turning, especially if it's a

blind curve. If you find it hard to turn your steering wheel or if it takes a while before your wheels actually turn even if you've been turning the steering wheel furiously for the past few seconds, then you may have:

**Possible Cause:** A [power steering belt](#) that is either damaged or has gone loose.

**Possible Solution:** The only options you have are to either have this unit repaired or you get it replaced completely. If it's still repairable but in a more or less bad shape, then I suggest replacing it anyways. (If you've got a belt that's starting to come undone or is beginning to breakdown, you'll just end up replacing it sooner rather than later anyways, so why wait, right?)

**Possible Cause:** Your power steering fluid level is too low.

**Possible Solution:** Like all the rest of your vehicle's fluid levels (coolant, refrigerant, windshield wiper, fuel, oil, etc.) it's best to check your power steering fluid once in a while. Too-low steering fluid levels can result in harder steering.

**Possible Cause:** A leak in your power steering rack.

**Possible Solution:** If you notice that your steering fluid level is running too low, too soon, then the problem might not be with how much fluid you put in—it could mean that you have a leak in your power steering rack. Check your steering rack for signs of leakage. If the damage is extensive, replace your steering rack immediately.

**If while turning your steering wheel “resists persistently” or moves unsteadily back and forth...** It's normal to feel a bit of resistance as you turn your steering wheel. But if you're already holding it steadily or turning with it steadily, and it still wobbles back and forth, then that's a sign that you may have...

**Possible Cause:** Damaged steering rack mount/s.

**Possible Solution:** The moment you feel that your steering wheel is starting to become uncontrollable, do take the time to check your steering rack mount for signs of damage. If you find that the mount is damaged, then I highly suggest repairing it as soon as you can.

**Possible Cause:** Power steering rack leakage.

**Possible Solution:** As I mentioned in the previous section, when you have a leaking power steering rack, you'll need to have the unit either repaired or replaced immediately.

**Possible Cause:** Too little power steering fluid in your ride.

**Possible Solution:** Add more fluid if needed.

**Possible Cause:** Your power steering belt is broken or loose.

**Possible Solution:** Again, it's either you tighten the belt or replace it completely.

**Possible Cause:** Your power steering pump is broken.

**Possible Solution:** Check your power steering pump to see if it's attaining the right pressure. If it isn't, then you need to replace it.

**Source:** <http://automechanics.wordpress.com/2008/10/11/car-maintenance-101-diagnosing-your-car%E2%80%99s-steering-problems/#more-181>