

Technical Assistance: 102

Handbrake calipers – Handbrake efficiency deteriorates over time.

Cause: Failure to take play out of handbrake on installation, then incorrectly adjusting the cable to give a reasonable feel at the handbrake lever, or cables may be binding. Both these faults stop the caliper levers returning fully home and prevent the auto adjusters from working. As the pads wear, the play is not taken up and hand brake efficiency deteriorates.

Solution: Disconnect the handbrake cable, unbolt the caliper from its guide pins and firmly force the piston back to remove any play (put slight hand pressure on the caliper lever and you'll feel the play gradually disappear - stop at this point to avoid possible damage to adjuster). Then, depending on type of adjusting mechanism (some have a hex key adjuster screw hidden behind a bung), wind the piston out so that the gap is just adequately wide enough to fit over the pads and disc. Refit the caliper and then press the brake pedal several times to let the auto adjuster remove any fine play still remaining. Replace damaged cables if necessary and adjust so that both caliper handbrake levers return fully home when the handbrake is in the off position; there should be no play, but both levers must go back to their stops. Press the brake pedal several times and your handbrake should adjust automatically.