

**Wheels:** Randall writes, “I have a 1998 Dodge Intrepid with a 2.7 L engine. When I check the oil with dipstick, I get a different reading every time, no matter how many times I check it. I called the dealer, he said to start the car and run the engine for a couple minutes. Then, shut it off and let sit a couple minutes, and check the oil level. It’s still the same. Do you have a suggestion?”

**Halderman:** For most engines, the oil level should be checked before starting the engine and after it has been sitting overnight. I have read that some engines will not display an accurate oil level unless the engine has been off for five hours or longer. It takes a long time for the oil to travel from passages and locations, such as the cylinder head and overhead camshafts, and back into the oil pan.

Also be sure that the vehicle is on a level location to avoid an error in reading the oil level. Therefore, for best results, park somewhere level and check the oil in the morning before starting the engine. Remove the dipstick and using a shop cloth, wipe the oil off and reinstall. Be sure that the dipstick is fully depressed to get an accurate measurement. Remove the dipstick a second time and observe the oil level. The oil level should be between full and add. Do not overfill. The add mark indicates that 1 quart of oil is needed.

