

Wheels: Brad writes, “I recently bought a 1987 Camry in great shape with only 95,000 miles. I heard a noise in my front wheel and it sounded like brakes. The brakes are great, brand new rotors and pads, but the bearing nut was way too tight and my dad and I had to use a breaker bar on it. We think the bearing is bad. How would we replace the bearing? It seems like it’s a solid piece with the lug bolts. I can’t really see the bearings – does it need to be pressed out or what? Is it bad to drive it now?”

Halderman: The drive axle shaft nut should be *very* tight – about 180 to 200 lb-ft. This is a front-wheel-drive car and it is different than the wheel bearings used on a rear-wheel-drive vehicle. There are two common problems with a front-wheel-drive vehicle:

1. Outer CV joints usually make a “clicking” sound especially when turning.
2. Front wheel bearings will make noise whenever driving (this is not as common).

These bearings are usually serviced (replaced) as part of the hub assembly. The CV joint is also replaced as a drive axle assembly in many cases. The cost of these assemblies is usually “reasonable” at \$100 to \$300. The replacement of these components is best handled by a professional that has the proper tools and training to accomplish the task. Have an experienced service technician diagnose the noise. It could be caused by a bent sheet metal dust/water shield that is rubbing against the brake rotor.

