

**Wheels:** An e-mail from Archie says, “I am experiencing an intermittent problem with my 1997 Toyota Corolla DX with the 1.8 liter engine and automatic transmission. Most of the time, the car starts and runs normally. On occasion, the car will start, but run at an extremely low RPM. I find if I give it a little gas and hold the accelerator steady, after awhile (depending on the outside temperature), the engine will rev up as it is supposed to do automatically and everything is OK. One never knows when this situation is going to occur and I find it very puzzling. My mechanic tells me that intermittent problems such as this are difficult to diagnose and, of course, I can never get the car to act up when the mechanic is there. What do you think?”

**Halderman:** Many idle-related problems are due to varnish build-up on the throttle plate and throttle body. These deposits are formed as a result of fumes from the crankcase and can cause a rough, low, or unstable idle. Most of the time, this problem can be corrected by cleaning the throttle plate. Sometimes, the idle air control (IAC) valve or solenoid needs to be removed and the passages cleaned to correct the problem. A technician could monitor the IAC position using a scan tool and if the commanded position is higher than normal (typically above 45% to 50% or 45 counts to 50 counts), then an air intake restriction is indicated. The cleaning of the throttle plate should cost \$100 or less.

