

**Wheels:** *Bob P. writes by e-mail: "I have a 2001 BMW Z3 Roadster with the 3.0 engine. Sometimes when accelerating in low gear, it hesitates as if the ignition was switched off and then on. It does not do it all the time, but often enough that it is aggravating. I have the feeling that it may be related to engine temperature. It never does anything like this in any other gear. It runs fine otherwise and doesn't do this even every time I drive it. As you can imagine OFF-ON while accelerating in low gear results in a HERKY-JERKY motion to the driver and passenger. After the BIG hesitation it will accelerate further if I want. Sometimes I just shift to second. Another thing that happens in low gear less often. When accelerating with the accelerator pedal at a steady position the engine seems to increase in power and acceleration. All problems happen in low gear only. The car has nearly 80,000 miles on it. Any thoughts on this will be much appreciated."*

**Halderman:** Thanks for writing. The first thing that I thought about was that the engine has a restricted intake system. This can be one of several things including:

1. A restricted air intake caused by road debris, such as a plastic bag caught in the air filter.
2. A dirty air filter
3. A dirty throttle plate

This last item is the most common and the most likely cause of your concern. A quick visual inspection may help eliminate the first two causes. If everything looks normal, see a professional shop or dealer for advice. Carbon cleaning is commonly done at most shops. This is not a do-it-yourself type service as it requires an expensive machine and unique chemicals (detergents and dispersants). While at the shop, the technicians could also check for other causes of the problem, such as a fault in the ignition system or the fuel injection system.

