

## Adjusting Garage Springs: A Short Primer



Working on garage doors may seem intimidating for the average person, but adjusting garage springs is actually fairly routine. In fact, maintaining not just the springs, but all parts of the garage door can mean extending the life of your door and avoiding more costly problems down the road. Following some simple guidelines, any homeowner from Erie to Denver can feel more confident in maintaining their garage door springs.

### An Introduction to Garage Springs:

Garage springs are very tightly wound, heavy duty springs that are responsible for all the heavy-lifting in opening and closing garage doors. They are under an immense amount of tension which offsets the weight of the door, making sure it opens and closes smoothly.

Because of the monumental amount of work they do, it's no surprise that they get worn out over time. When your **garage door** starts acting funny, for instance stopping or pausing during its opening/closing cycle, appearing crooked, or closing too hard, chances are the springs could use an adjustment.

### Recognizing Your Garage Springs:

On modern sectional garage doors, there are two main types of springs:

#### Torsion springs:

Torsion springs will be wrapped around a metal shaft located above, and running parallel to your garage door frame. There may be one or two of them, depending on the weight of the door. These are usually used for doors over 10 feet wide.

#### Side or extension mounted springs:

Just as they sound, side mounted springs are mounted above the side tracks running into your garage on either side of the door mechanism. These have hooks that attach on one end to the track assembly, and on the other to a cable that acts in a pulley system. There will always be two side-mounted springs, one on each side.

It is important to note: As mentioned, torsion springs in particular are under an immense amount of tension. Homeowners should always exercise caution, wearing proper safety equipment and using proper lighting while working on garage doors. Homeowners in need of a full replacement should consider hiring a professional to avoid danger of bodily harm.

Openers may also have an instruction manual which should be referred to first.

### [More on Torsion vs. Extension Springs](#)

### Determining the Adjustment

Here are some basic problems and solutions:

Door is...

- Not closing fully
- Difficult to close
- Opening too quickly

*Solution:* **INCREASE** tension

Door is...

- Difficult to open
- Closing too quickly

*Solution:* **DECREASE** tension

Tension should be adjusted evenly on both sides **UNLESS:**

Door is...

- Closing unevenly.

In this case, the solution is to adjust the tension **only** on the side where the gap is.

### Basics of Torsion Spring Adjustment:

**Prepare.** All tools should be inside the garage unless there's an alternate point of entry/exit. Door is unplugged (for electric openers) and down all the way. To ensure that the door stays in the down position, the C-clamp is placed on the garage door track above the bottom roller.

**It is important that the door stays down.** The torsion spring must be under tension for it to be adjusted, and with the door in the down position it will be under a great amount of tension. As the spring is adjusted, the door can rise creating a dangerous situation. Please consult a professional if this is not a task you've done before or have been properly instructed on.

**The winding cone.** At each end of the spring, there's a winding cone which locks the spring in place. The cone has four holes, evenly spaced in an X around the cone. It also has two screws which hold the cone in place.

**Hold and loosen.** A winding bar or metal rod is inserted in the bottom hole of the winding cone. While using the bar to hold the cone in place, the screws are loosened.

**Adjust.** A second bar or rod is inserted into another adjustment hole either directly in front of or behind the first one. I.e. the rods should be next to each other, not across from each other.

**Rotate.** Using the bars as leverage, the cone is rotated up (increase tension) or down (decrease tension) at 90 degree increments in the same amount on each side.

**Test and repeat.** One 90 degree turn should be done at a time, testing the door and going through each step over again as needed.

### Basics of Side-mounted Spring Adjustment:

**Prepare.** For side-mounted springs the door must be fully open to make sure the tension on the spring is fully released. Electric openers must be unplugged and disconnected. The c-clamp can be used below the lowest door roller to hold it open.

**The spring hook is removed** from the track hanger (nut holding hook in place is also removed).

**Adjust.** The hook is moved to a higher hole to increase tension, or a lower hole to decrease tension.

**Test and repeat.** Door is tested and steps are repeated each time.