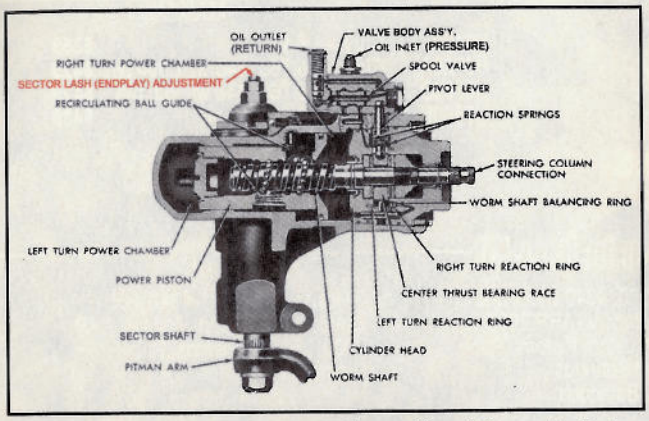
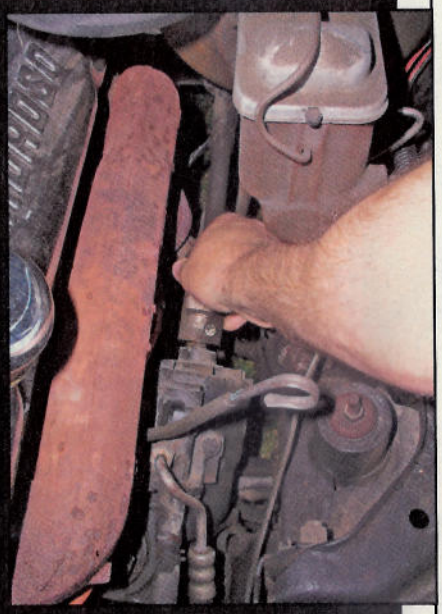
## LASH BASH

The simplest, zero-buck way to improve steering feel and remove slop is a 2-minute lash adjustment. (Bet you have at least 2" of free-play at the wheel.) Yet, many guys are afraid to touch this, or, even worse, have no idea how to do it properly. Done wrong, it can produce a totally numb steering system. It is really a *cinch* to do right. We'll make you an expert.

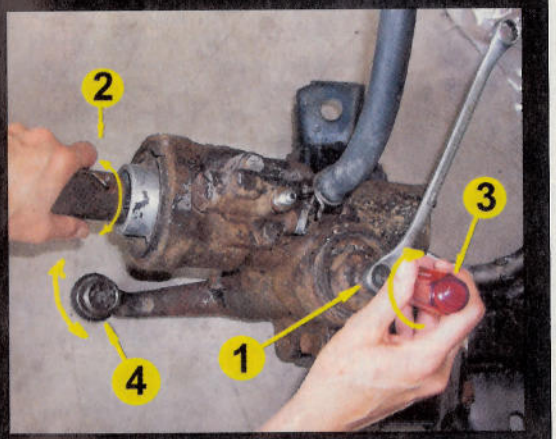



**This factory cutaway clearly shows the position of the sector lash adjustment (and locknut), just forward of the valve body's return nipple. But how, exactly, do you adjust the lash, to eliminate wheel freeplay? Yeah, how?**



**Keep the wheels on the ground up and the engine idling; be sure the wheels are dead-ahead, as indicated by the master spline on input shaft (and/or notch on OEM coupler and stripe on OEM steering shaft) at 12 o'clock. *THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT*—it puts the gears on the "high spot." This also assumes nothing is bent, twisted, or otherwise mucked. On just about any Mopar except slant sixes, you'll be smart to be wearing some heavy leather or asbestos welder's-type gloves—you'll be right by the exhaust, grabbing the coupler body.**

**It was tricky to photograph the details of what you're doing on an actual vehicle, so we built this mock-up for clarity. Loosen the locknut (1). Start the engine. Reminder: all three wheels should be straight ahead (i.e., do this last, *after* your front-end alignment.) Now rock the coupler (2) back and forth about +/– 5° of rotation (from the dead-ahead, 12 o'clock position) while observing the movement of the pitman arm (4). Tighten the adjusting screw (3), which may be slotted or hex-recess [Allen] depending on the box's year of manufacture) until any observed slop just disappears. Then re-test, this time rotating the coupler even less. The goal is positive pitman movement, however slight, for any sector rotation. Once that point is reached, tighten the screw just a kitty hair more—maximum 5° (This assumes a well-used box; on a new or nearly-new box you'll want a bit more preload). Now, tighten the locknut while holding the screw in position. Now's a great time to check for any slop in tie rod ends, the pitman arm ball end, the idler arm (both ends), and even the LBJs (which usually don't result in much static steering slop; vehicle weight keeps the ball firmly in the socket.)**

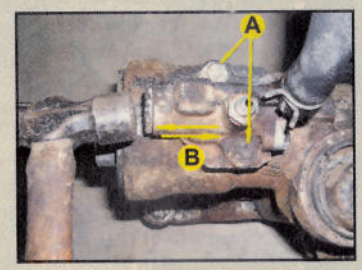



## VALVE JOB

Everybody knows that a lousy front-end alignment (especially unbalanced camber, L/R) makes your Mopar pull or drift to one side. But did you know that a simple incorrect adjustment to your power steering *gear* can cause the same symptom? It's true, and, when seriously misadjusted, can make the pull so strong that even Schwartzenegger (The Governator) would be hard pressed to keep the car aimed straight ahead.

This adjustment will take only minutes, testing for incorrect adjustment is even faster. Check the pix for the meat and potatoes.


**Place the wheels in the dead-ahead position, engine off, wheels off the ground. Now start the engine while observing the steering wheel. There should be zero movement of the wheel as the engine starts. If there is the slightest movement, the valve body needs to be adjusted.**




**To adjust, loosen the valve body screws (arrows, A, until they are finger tight, then snug them up a skosh. Tap the valve body back (B) and forth until there is zero self-steering tendency. Two caveats here: First, if the bolts are too loose during the adjustment, fluid will spray out all over. It's ugly. Second, if you inadvertently adjust it way off, the wheel can *violently* turn when the engine is started, so never reach for the key through the wheel. Randy Bouchillon has witnessed a broken arm this way. If you're a blueprint-brain, you can check the turning torque at the steering wheel nut (in./lb. torque wrench); it should be identical in both directions.**