Different types of flywheels

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Chances are you don"t give much thought to that metal disc spinning inside of your bellhousing. However, choosing the best flywheel for your vehicle application will greatly affect performance, drivability, and your vehicle’s safety.

NOTE: The flywheel experts we consulted at Centerforce recommend replacing your flywheel fasteners when installing a new flywheel because your bolt strength should match or exceed the material strength of the flywheel.

Standard-weight flywheels store more energy, and these flywheels are a good choice for helping to move stock-geared cars, and heavier vehicles like trucks, drag cars, rock crawlers, etc. Additionally, heavier flywheels slow throttle response and maintain engine rpm longer on deceleration, sometimes referred to as "hang time.”

A lightweight flywheel translates to faster engine response, on both acceleration and deceleration. They"re preferred for road racing and circle track because they allow the driver to drive deeper into turns with a sharper rpm drop as the driver lets off the throttle, then help the engine recover faster into its power band heading into the straightaway.

They"re cast from proprietary iron, alloyed with a select blend of materials. After the casting has cooled, all surfaces and bolt holes are machined to specification, and then the flywheel is balanced. Cast flywheels are available in cast grey iron or nodular iron.

Billet steel is a solid length of material that is formed in a blast furnace to remove impurities, then extruded into shape either by continuous casting or hot rolling. Billet is considerably stronger than iron and will remain free of stress cracks.

Billet flywheels are made from blanks sectioned away from portions of the larger bar (similar to slicing away a piece of bread), machined to specification, and then balanced. A final machining process removes stress areas from the metal, creating additional strength.

The majority of billet flywheels are also SFI-1.1 certified for racing use. If your car"s 1/4-mile E.T. is faster 11.5 seconds, an SFI-1.1 spec flywheel is required, along with the proper SFI-rated bellhousing.

To address this, a heat-treated steel friction insert is secured by screws or rivets to the flywheel. These inserts are replaceable, but riveted ones must sometimes be sent back to the manufacturer for resurfacing.

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