

More Power!

May 2011

Suprise

As promised previously, let's talk about the right way to add more power to your Miata. We could all use some more power, right? All those GPS units, cell phone chargers and satellite radios need juice. Wait, you thought I meant horsepower, didn't you? That's a whole 'nother can of worms we'll open some other day.

Lots of folks have more than one driving accessory they need to plug in, or they don't like the location of the 12V cigar lighter in the Miata. Fortunately, the placement of the one in the NA isn't too bad, but it's awfully close to the shift lever in the NB and NC cars. Sometimes, you really need to plug in that 110V item and just how do we do that? Here are some ideas and suggestions to satisfy those needs.

First, let's add some additional 12V outlets. The easiest thing to do is to add a splitter. These devices plug into the lighter socket and terminate in 2-4 outlets. They work great for most devices you'd use in a car. Be advised though, that I wouldn't plug anything in that draws a lot of current (more than a couple hundred watts) since those outlets are still running through the original socket and fuse for the cigar lighter. These splitters can be found in the auto department of your local retail store, Radio Shack, auto parts stores, even truck stops.

Perhaps you'd like an extra outlet but would like to hide the new socket somewhere rather than have an unsightly splitter hanging from your existing lighter socket? There are a couple ways to do this. The easy "right" way is to start with a product called "Add-A-Fuse". They can be found in the electrical section of your local auto parts store.

These little beauties allow you to easily add a new, fused circuit to the car. Simply...

1. Remove an existing fuse from the fuse box underneath the dash and plug the add-a-fuse in its place.
2. Put the old fuse and fuse for the new circuit into the add-a-fuse and you're almost done (it's pretty self-explanatory when you see the add-a-fuse product). The red pigtail now supplies you with 12V power.
3. Hook the + side of your new lighter socket to the red pigtail and attach the - side to nearly any screw under the dash that passes thru metal.

Of course, you can find your new lighter socket at the auto parts store where you got the add-a-fuse. There are different designs of sockets depending on where you want to mount them. I like the ones with the mounting feet so you can easily screw them into place.

Now for some mounting location ideas! It really depends on what you're plugging in and how accessible you want it to be. Mounting in the glove box or under the dash are pretty simple. On the side of the console next to the rear bulkhead is another. A great

spot I've used before is on the carpet behind/below the passenger seat. It's a handy place if you're plugging in something from the center console and you don't need to access it often. Sheet metal screws work great to secure the socket to the carpeting and it's not like there's a lot of loading on a lighter socket anyway!

If you need to plug in a laptop or other 110v device, you're going to need an inverter. These plug into the cigar lighter socket and convert 12v to 110V while you plug your device into the 110V socket on the inverter. Inverters can be found the same places we mentioned earlier. The important thing to know is that you need to match the size (watts rating) of the inverter to the device you want to plug in. Look on your device and it should state how many watts it draws. Get an inverter larger than that and Bob's your uncle.

This ought to make you dangerous AND help you accomplish a nice little project on your car. Who knows what we'll talk about next month...

Disclaimer: Scanned for viruses. Sealed for your protection. First pull up, then pull down. To open, push down, then turn.