

VAG Tensioners

OE Differences by design

Strongline explains why the OE tensioner that comes off the car might look different to the Gates OE quality replacement that's inside the PowerGrip box.

Vehicle manufacturers commission a range of component designs from different suppliers as a matter of routine, for logistical reasons and for a consistent supply of parts. Good examples of this in practice are the OE tensioners designed for the timing belt drives on a wide range of VW engines in the 1.6 and 2.0 litre range.

Two different tensioner designs were commissioned and fitted to vehicles like the VW Polo and many other models throughout the VW Audi group. The tensioners perform the same tasks. They deliver the same level of performance, are interchangeable, and they are designed to be compatible with the drive systems of all the vehicles in this particular range.

However these tensioners:

- Look very different
- Are designed by two different OE suppliers
- Have different installation procedures

Visual differences

Figure 1 is the Double Eccentric tensioner supplied by Litens, complete with locating tab. That tab is the major difference between the two tensioners. Figure 2 shows the OE T43219 tensioner designed and supplied by Gates for these same engines. It's the tensioner included in PowerGrip Kits K025649XS and KP25649XS-1. It is a Single Eccentric (off centre) design. There is no locating tab.

Because the Gates tensioner has no locating tab, most installers think it's a faster and easier tensioner to install. It is mounted with an allen key in the 9 O'Clock position. There is enough slack for the belt to fit easily around all of the pulleys. Once in position, the adjuster is turned **anticlockwise**, until the back plate and indicator are aligned. That's it. Full mounting instructions, plus routing diagrams that are specific to each VW engine can be accessed online, via a mobile phone, by scanning the QR code on the side of the box. Alternatively, you can search for the product code online.

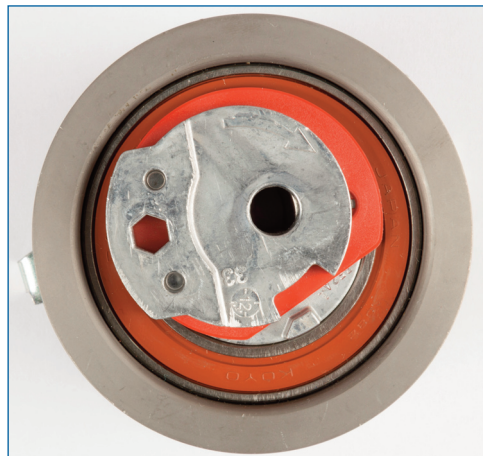


Figure 1 - The Double Eccentric Tensioner supplied by Litens

By contrast, the alternative tensioner needs the locating tab to guide movement. It is vital that the back plate moves up and down in the slot, as part of the installation procedure. The purpose of the tab is to locate the tensioner and to prevent back plate rotation (left to right). Slack is needed to slip the belt over the pulleys in the drive system. This is achieved by rotating the tensioner.

Once in place, the pointer is aligned with the back plate by removing the pin and turning the adjuster **clockwise**.

Misplaced installer concerns

Mechanics often think that because the installation procedure for the T43219 is different and so straightforward (in comparison to the tensioner with the tab), it must be the wrong tensioner. In order to rectify this misconception, Gates devised and introduced Tech Tip No.12, which highlights the differences in appearance. It also draws attention to the variations in the actual installation procedures. It emphasises that the Gates tensioner was designed specifically for the engines in this particular range.

Technical Notes

A Gates video provides technical support and further clarity, with a clear



Figure 2 - The OE T43219 tensioner supplied by Gates for the same engines as Figure 1

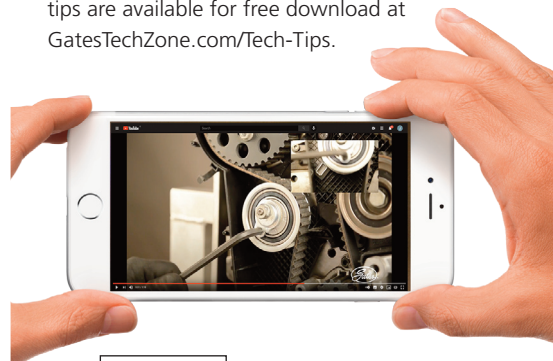
overview of the design differences and the ease of fitting Gates tensioner T43219.

Watch this video at:

[Youtube.com/watch?v=10HR-UyVEZE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10HR-UyVEZE) or scan the QR code below.

This Gates tensioner, T43219, is included in PowerGrip Kits K025649XS and KP25649XS-1. The tensioner, and other parts, can be searched for in the agtes online catalogue at [Gatesautocat.com](https://www.gatesautocat.com).

This Gates Tech Tip, No.12, and other tips are available for free download at [GatesTechZone.com/Tech-Tips](https://www.GatesTechZone.com/Tech-Tips).



Scan this QR code to watch the video about installing this Gates tensioner

