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INTAKE SYSTEM

Despite problems we had during the early development and testing of our early ACR, we can say, with confidence, that no other performance bolt-on will give you better “bang for the buck” than an aftermarket intake. The first time we tested an intake on our ACR, the computer didn’t seem to like it. But no one was actually making an intake specifically for the Neon back then. It’s much different now, as you have several reputable manufacturers from which to choose.

The bang-for-the-buck statement holds true for the permanent high-performance stock replacement filters, engine compartment air velocity intake units, and cold-air intakes. Which system you choose should depend on what you want to do with your car. If you plan on racing your Neon, then first check with the specific rules that govern your class. You may find that they won’t allow for anything other than a stock replacement filter.

If you live in a sandy, dusty, or rainy area, then a cold-air intake may not be for you. If you live in a particularly hot climate, and your car’s underhood temperatures can become excessively warm, then a standard aftermarket air velocity intake may not perform as well as a cold-air unit. Standard units suck hot engine compartment air, which doesn’t burn as well as cooler, denser air. If you take a close look at where most of the warm-air intake systems get their air from, you’ll see that it’s right above the header/exhaust manifold. For this reason, Neons seem to like the cold-air intake systems bet-



Intakes come in all shapes and sizes. One of the benefits of the Neon powerplant vs. the traditional Honda OHC engine is that the intake faces forward. Open a hole in the hood, and you’ll have direct access. (Photo courtesy Gil Diaz)



Installing an aftermarket intake system is probably the best bang for the buck for a Neon 2.0-liter powerplant. The potential for gain is even higher for a 2001-'04 R/T and a 2001-'02 ACR. This is an Iceman intake on a first-generation Neon. (Photo courtesy Patrick O'Hara)



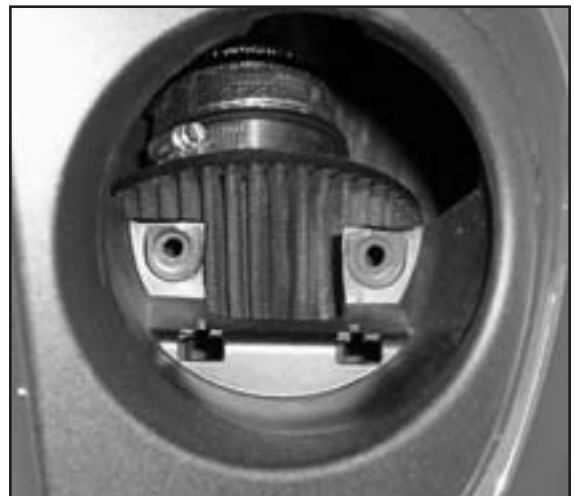
There are a variety of cold-air intakes available from Mopar Performance Parts. This particular model fits 2000-2004 non-Magnum SOHC Neons. (Photo courtesy Mopar Performance Parts)



AEM offers intakes for a variety of Neon models. This one fits first-gen DOHC Neons with manual transmissions. As you can see, the air filter is placed outside the engine compartment for access to cool, dense air. (Photo courtesy of AEM)



This cold-air intake from AEM fits second-gen Magnum SOHC Neons. AEM intakes are also available powder-coated in red, blue, or silver, and are guaranteed for the life of the vehicle. (Photo courtesy of AEM)



Some cold-kits put the filter behind the factory fog light. You can remove the fog light at the track, giving the cold air a straight shot into your filter. (Photo courtesy Chris Maluege)

ter than the short-ram or warm-air units. The Iceman and AEM cold-air intakes are probably the most popular among Neon enthusiasts. First-generation Neon owners seem to prefer the Iceman, while second-generation owners usually go with the AEM system.

Many also make their own using an air-box hose from a Dodge Caravan.

You can probably tell by now that we don't always agree with the aftermarket parts manufacturers when it comes to their claims of "instant bolt-on performance." Frankly, when it comes to

product claims, we have been disappointed far more than we have been pleasantly surprised. This isn't the case with mods to the air intake systems. After dyno testing nearly every aftermarket air cleaner on the planet, we've found performance claims to be true – in