

How do I hook up the wires?

Check with the manufacturer. Find someone who has one like yours with an instruction sheet. If all else fails, here's what I've seen, but there's no guarantee that it will work for your tach.

Most modern tachometers have 4 wires, usually color-coded red, white, green, and black. This is what I refer to as a 'standard' 4-wire hookup. The wires are connected as follows:

- Red - connect to a switched ignition source, positive (+).
- Black - connect to ground (-).
- Green - connect to the coil's negative (-) terminal. See section on [MSD ignitions](#) if you're using one.
- White, sometimes yellow or blue or striped insulation - connect to the dash light wiring if you want the tachometer lighting to work and dim with the dash lights. If the dash light circuit is too difficult to tap into or not worth the effort, it can be connected to a switched ignition source, same as the red wire, and the light will work whenever the ignition is turned on (this is how I usually connect mine). The dash light circuit board is very difficult to tap into, the easiest way to connect to the lighting circuit is to find a separate wire that runs to a light, like the light for the heater controls, AM/FM radio lighting, etc. Splicing into that wire will be easier.

There are also some older Sun Super Tach IIs that had removable wiring. The terminals can be found on the backside clustered in a group of 4 and labeled (clockwise starting from the top) T, B, G, L. These terminals require a small bullet-style female connector and should be connected as follows:

- T - trigger or ignition trigger - connect to the coil's negative (-) terminal
- B - battery - connect to a switched positive (+) source. Do not connect directly to the battery.
- G - ground - connect to ground.
- L - light - connect to a dashlight or switched positive source.

I've seen some Dixco tachometers with 3 wires, usually color-coded red, black, and white or green. Connected as follows:

- Red - connect to a switched ignition source, positive (+).
- Black - connect to ground (-).
- White or green - connect to the coil's negative (-) terminal.

Some tachs require a separate sending unit, or transmitter, in addition to the tachometer gauge itself. The older Sun tachs are a good example of this. [Click here](#) for info on older Sun tachs and transmitters and how to know if a transmitter is required; otherwise, contact the manufacturer of your unit.

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Where do I get batteries for my Sun tach transmitter?

Try checking Hemmings for a company named Show Cars, which specializes in 348 and 409 Chevy. They list batteries for the '62 409 Sun tach.

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What about my MSD ignition?

Some tachometers are not compatible with MSD ignitions, but the tach manufacturer's documentation should indicate if that's the case.

Your MSD 'brain' box may have a terminal marked "tachometer" on it. If so, this is where you connect the tach wire **instead of** the negative (-) coil terminal. See your MSD and you tachometer documentation, don't rely solely on what I've listed here.

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Why doesn't the needle go to zero when I turn off the key?

Many tachometer needles do not return to zero when you turn off the key. This is normal and does not indicate anything is wrong with the unit.

Typically, older units had a spring-loaded meter which returned to zero but also required a zero-adjust setting to make sure the spring returned the pointer exactly to the zero point, no higher or lower.

Newer "air core" meters do not have a spring-loaded mechanism. They move to the precise position when power is applied. So, when the key is turned on, the pointer will move to zero. When the key is turned off, the pointer will typically stay where ever it is.

There are also some older spring-loaded movements that rest higher than 0 but will return to zero when the key is switched on. Any zero-adjust with this type of tach needs to be made when the key is on.

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My tach doesn't work. Who can fix it for me?

There are several companies that can repair tachometers. Try the manufacturer first. If that doesn't work, check the Parts and Services listings in Hemmings Motor News for companies advertising services.

You can also try searching the Internet for companies that repair and specialize in older automotive instruments. [Williamsons](#) is just one example. Incidentally, they sell used and NOS Sun items ranging from a couple hundred to a few hundred dollars, depending on condition, and include a guarantee. The price sounds expensive but who do you know that would guarantee a 35-year-old NOS part? You get what you pay for.

I will buy or trade for your busted tach, depending on what is wrong with it. I may be able to save it or salvage parts for other tachs.

Also, I work on many of the swap-meet items that I pick up, and I generally have good results. If you're willing to trust me I would consider working on your tach, depending on what is wrong with it, but I cannot promise or guarantee results. I would not charge for my time, just parts if any are needed, plus shipping. Why would I do that? Because I'm just another car nut and don't mind helping out other similarly-afflicted individuals. [Contact me](#) for more info.

Can you convert my tach to full electronics so no transmitter is needed?

Converting a separate tach and transmitter to full electronics is not a simple task. And, you want to make sure that the electronics used in the conversion are heavy enough to handle the application and can withstand the heat and cold cycles you car goes through.

There are several companies that advertise this service. Check the Parts and Services listings in Hemmings Motor News for a few. Online, you can try [Williamsons](#) and also [D&M Restoration](#)