

What's the difference between cold air intakes and regular air intakes?

My mind is cluttered enough with all kinds of information that I have to keep straight. How much extra should I tip the cabby whose backseat I sprayed vomit all over? How many days can I hold out paying my rent without getting evicted? What year is it? I was hoping that shopping for performance accessories for my Acura RSX wouldn't require that much brain power, but I was wrong...dead wrong. All I wanted to do was improve my throttle response, enhance my off-the-line spring, and maybe even get a little extra fuel efficiency. A buddy of mine recommended a cold air intake, but then another friend said I should pick up just a regular air intake. I was in a tailspin of confusion. What exactly is the difference between cold air intakes and air intakes? Before I hopped online and did some research, I was completely dumbfounded. But that's not the whole story.

While wrestling with this daunting question, I knew some serious intellectual concentration would be needed. Since I'm not big on focusing, I realized that I would need some help. So I cruised over to my local watering hole to get bit of liquid smarts in the form of boiler makers, and lots of 'em. The first tumbler was a bit harsh, burning my larynx as it rolled down into my waiting belly. After that, though, each round got easier and easier to chug, and I could barely even taste the fifth glass. As I slammed that last empty mug down onto the bar, I was filled with an overwhelming sense of clarity. The mental pump had been thoroughly primed, and I was ready to tackle my research project.

Standing up from my barstool, I knew nothing could distract me from uncovering the answer to my vexing accessory question. Not even the gorgeous girl shooting pool in the back corner could make me swerve off my course, nor her hulking boyfriend who accosted me for slapping her rump as I walked past, nor his entourage of goons who dragged me into the back alley and beat the religion out of me, nor the hobo who rooted through my pockets and made off with my wallet while I was passed out, nor the sausage-fingered bus driver who wouldn't let me on because of all the blood, nor the insensitive cashier at the burrito shop who wouldn't sell me a quesadilla on credit, nor my lousy neighbors who threatened to call the cops because I decided to wash the clotted gore off my body in the apartment complex's over-chlorinated pool. No. I had a date with knowledge, and I wasn't going to stand her up.

Though my left eye was swollen shut, I was still perfectly capable of googling an answer, and what I learned shocked me. The difference is that a cold air intake relocates the filter outside of the engine compartment to suck in colder, fresher, more energetic oxygen. A standard air intake, on the other hand, just replaces or modifies the stock intake, which still delivers serious performance gains. Mystery solved. And I only lost a quart or so of my precious bodily fluids in the process.

You may want to do your own research but, I can tell you I got my answers about [cold air intakes](#) and [air intakes](#) online while recovering from my off-line research activities. I guess I should have done that first. - David S. Brooks

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About the Author

David Brooks is the SEO Manager for [AutoAnything](#), an auto accessories and performance parts e-tailer based in San Diego, CA.