

Opening and Painting Headlights 01-02

CougarDB.com

Refer to 1999/2000 Headlight Tutorial for Pictures

By 01blkcat

What you need:

1. Long regular (flathead) screwdriver
2. Silicone or 3m Windshield Adhesive (I used the 3m, works better)
3. About three hours
4. Torx bit (T15) <- optional, but saves time
5. Vice grips and dremel (if you don't have the torx bit)

What you do:

1. Remove the grill from the front of the vehicle by unscrewing the two screws, one at both end of the grill. Be careful when removing the grill, as the lip on the bottom will scratch the bumper cover.
2. Remove each headlight, by first loosening (do not remove) the screw that is behind the headlight. Turn it just a few times, as if it falls out, it is a PITA to replace. Then remove the other two screws, one on the crossmember, and one that was originally near where the grill was.
3. Once the headlight is loose, pull out gently (may need extra force if this is the first time you've done this), and disconnect the three connectors. You do not need to remove the bulbs and their plugs.
4. Take the headlight to a flat, covered surface to work, preferably something that will 'give' a little, like a piece of heavy foam, so that the headlight doesn't skid around when you're working on it. Pop off the SEVEN little clips that are holding the housings together. Be careful when doing so to pop from the "glass" section to the black plastic section, or you may break off some of the little supports. If this happens, this isn't a big deal, as you're going to need to reseal with some silicone or windshield adhesive, anyway.
5. Now that you've got the headlight completely unsupported, feel free to take the bulbs out. This is optional, but may help from breaking the bulbs and their harnesses.
6. Turn the headlight over, so that the bottom is facing you. Starting about an inch from the end near the reflector, dig a screwdriver in about 1/2" at a 45 degree angle, and slowly (note SLOWLY) pull up to a 90 degree angle. Using another screwdriver, do the same about an inch from the first. Continue using the two screwdrivers to separate the entire assembly, basically using a hand over hand

- technique. The goo will NOT bind back together, so don't worry if a section you've already done has gone back together a bit. It takes about 5 minutes to do the entire light the right way.
7. As you start to separate the top of the headlight, the weatherstripping will become loose. Make sure you see how it connects to the front section (it's just a few tabs that slide into the "clear" part). It won't come completely loose, so just hold onto it as you pull the headlight apart, and you'll be fine. It should stay with the clear part of the lense.
 8. Once you're "punctured" the entire headlight all of the way around, take the corner that would normally face closest to the GRILL and begin to pull apart by hand. Don't use the side with the sidemarker, as it's not as strong, and may crack. If you have chosen not to move your bulbs, then you'll need to separate the headlight assembly slowly, an equal amount all of the way around, or you may break off the bulb heads as the light separates.
 9. Once you've got the headlight separated, you'll have to clear some of the black goo up. Don't throw it out -- just bundle it back up against the sides of the black assembly.
 10. There are two torx bolts holding the chrome part onto the plastic front. These are torx T15 bits. You can also do what I did by using a vice grips to simply grab and turn them. I had to dremel a little bit of the chrome from the front bolt (you'll see it when you open it up) in order to grab onto the bolt. None of the damage done by this method can be seen from the front, so don't worry. Otherwise, just use the T15 bit
 11. From here, do what you want to do with the headlight... paint it, remove the reflector, clean it, etc.

When it comes time to seal it back up....

12. Reconnect the chrome piece inside of the plastic cover, and reattach the screws/torx bits.
 13. Clean most of the existing black goo from the two assemblies, and close the light back up. Make sure you use generous amounts of the silicone or the windshield adhesive, or you'll have condensation in the lights. Make sure that the adhesive or silicone is placed UNDER the weatherstripping, or fogging will occur. It's important to lift up on the weatherstripping's support, put some adhesive under it, and then place the support down into the adhesive to make it stick.
 14. Reattach the seven clips. If you broke any of the supports for the clips, take a piece of the adhesive and "create" a divot so that the clip can be reattached. It doesn't need to be a completely tight connection, as the adhesive will take care of that problem. Once you've got everything back together, take one last run at the adhesive/silicone along the top, under the weatherstripping, where the two pieces come together. This will ensure that no water enters from the top of the line, where it is most likely to enter.
 15. Reinstall into the vehicle, simply reversing the removal instructions.
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RigaTony00's How-To for 2001-2002 headlights.

Supplies needed: Flat-head screwdrivers, T-15 Torx Bit, Black silicone adhesive. Also, a razor blade can be helpful.

- 1.) Remove headlights from car. (You have to remove your front grill, and then there are 3 screws holding the headlights in.)
- 2.) There are 7 little black metal clips which go around the perimeter of the headlights. Pop those off, using a flat-head screwdriver.
- 3.) I removed the black rubber stripping. This isn't necessary, but it gives you more room to work with, and also allows you to see a little better. Note how the stripping is attached in there, as it will help you put it back in.
- 4.) Starting at the corner, gently wedge a screwdriver in between the black plastic and the clear part of the headlight.
- 5.) You will be able to see that black goo (silicone) is holding the lights together. I wedged my screw driver in between, to pry them open a tiny bit, then cut up all the goo with a razor blade. You could also use a screw driver to break up the goo, but be gentle, as you don't want to crack the light.
- 6.) The black silicone goes all the way around the headlight, so just work your way slowly around. fortunately, once you cut thru the silicone, it won't stick back together, so you don't have to worry about sticking screwdrivers in there to hold them open.
- 7.) Once all the silicone has been broken, you will be able to pull the clear front away from the black back. Do this by pulling straight, not at an angle, or you'll crack your turn-single bulb.
- 8.) Once this is done, you'll see that the clear front has a chrome housing in it, preventing you from getting your reflector out. The housing has two torx screws in it. You'll need a T-15 torx bit, with the tamper proof head on it. I got mine at autozone, for \$2.49.
- 9.) Once you unscrew the Torx screws, remove the chrome piece from the clear piece, and break a few of the orange tabs on the back of the chrome piece, which are holding the reflector in place. The reflector will then fall out. Make sure that you get all the little orange pieces you broke off out of the light before you close it back up.
- 10.) While you have the light open, I cleaned the inside of the clear part, as well as the chrome piece, so there would be no fingerprints once i closed the light back up.
- 11.) Now it's time to put the lights back together. Screw the chrome piece back into the clear housing. On the back of the light (black part) You'll see almost a little indented

track running around the outside of the light. Take your silicone (\$3.49 at autozone) and go around the track, filling it in with the silicone. When finished, just line the clear part up with the black part, and push it together. You might want to hold it together for a few minutes, so the silicone can bond to it. Take a towel, and wipe off any extra silicone that might be running over to the outside of the light. Then, put the weatherstripping back on. It slides on, and you just push the little tab things it has on it back in. Then put the little black metal clips on, and let the silicone dry for like an hour. If you get any silicone on the clear part of the headlight, **DO NOT TRY TO RUB IT OFF!!!!!!!!!!** Let it dry 1st, then you can peel it right off. If you rub at it, it just spreads it on the light, and is a bitch to get off (I found this out the hard way).

12.) Do the same for both headlights. When it's dry, put the headlight back in your car. If you want your car to be legal, you'll need to put an amber bulb in the place where the reflector was. (it has a white bulb in it originally). It is the same bulb that the sidemarkers take. (I believe it is a 194 or 195.)