

Brake Time!

Old Glory gets some big time stopping power with a set of front disc brakes.

Stopping power is one of those “taken for granted” deals. It’s just assumed that when you mash that brake pedal, your 3300 lb (or greater) car is going to hunker down and come to an effortless halt. You *know* your car (hopefully). You know how fast it is, and the kinds of distances you need to slow that bad boy down. Let’s face it, it doesn’t take a genius to know that a four-and-a quarter horse R-code Fairlane with 4-wheel drums can’t haul it down as fast as say, a new SVT Cobra. Brakes are one of those things that hey, if they work, they work. We’re here to show you that with a little time and effort, they can work a whole heck of a lot better.

Let’s get one thing straight right away. Stainless Steel Brakes’ kit is for cars with 5-lug wheels (read: V8 power). It’s a great, high-end kit, and everything during this phase of our project went very smoothly. Brake assembly is straightforward, as we expected it would be. Trust us, this won’t tax your mechanical IQ. We’ll cover rotor/caliper assembly and installation this issue, and master cylinder/power booster installation, hard line routing, proportioning valve locating, and brake bleeding in the next *LFM*. That’s when it gets a little more challenging.

Stainless Steel Brakes indicates that the minimum wheel size for this exercise is a 14x7”. Since we wanted Old Glory to roll on 15” rubber, we decided to take a trek to the nearest salvage yard. We dissected a ‘66 T-Bird, and snagged its 15” (originally disc brake equipped) wheels. Alas, these babies were only 5-1/2”. So, we sweated a little, hoping they would be deep enough to swallow up those new rotor assemblies. They were. In fact, our Fairlane’s original 14x5s fit! What’s more, there’s no need to hunt for new spindles. The stockers will do just fine. So now there’s no excuses. Let’s do it.

Please note: Readers/restorers performing any of the steps listed or pictured in this feature do so at their own risk. *Legendary Ford Magazine* assumes no liability whatsoever. Please use common sense when working on any automotive project!

Stainless Steel Brakes’ instruction sheet is clear and concise. All warnings and instructions should be followed to the letter.



Part One ...

TOOLS REQUIRED:

- floorjack and jackstands
- torque wrench
- wrenches (socket, standard)
- mallet (or that 5-lb. sledge)
- wheel bearing grease
- brake fluid
- brake cleaner



The whole shootin’ match from Stainless Steel Brakes. This is their kit (for 1964-’66 Ford and Mercury), as we unpacked it. The caliber of this kit is what first hit us. Every piece is of the highest quality, and best of all, it’s all there: impressive 11-1/4” slotted rotors, a nicely detailed master cylinder, heavy-duty four-piston calipers, pads, splash shields, mounting brackets, hard lines, flexible lines, wheel bearings, etc., etc. No disappointments.

We’re going to start this part of the feature working on the table. We’ve already talked about getting your car safely in the air (on a lift or on some good quality jackstands) in our front end rebuild story (see page 38 this issue).

First up: Front brake drum removal

- After removing your wheels, you’ll need to pull the grease cap from the hub. Next, remove the cotter pin, nut lock, adjusting nut, and flat washer from the spindle. Then remove the outer bearing.
- Next, pull the hub and drum assembly from the spindle. If the brake drum will not come off easily, you’ll need to retract the shoes by inserting a narrow screwdriver through the brake adjusting slot (in the backing plate) and disengage the adjusting lever from the adjusting screw. While holding the adjusting lever away from the adjusting screw, back off the adjuster.

• Now, you'll need to drain the brake fluid that's in the system. Remove the master cylinder cover, and use a syringe to remove as much brake fluid as possible. Then, attach hoses to the front bleeder screws and drain into a container. **Use caution not to get brake fluid on your car's paint.** It can cause severe damage! Also, you want to make sure that when you remove the flexible (soft) brake lines from your brake cylinders, you're not leaking fluid everywhere. These instructions (and more) are covered in great detail with the kit from SSBC.

Next, you're going to remove the entire drum brake assembly (as a unit) by removing the 4 bolts that attach the backing plate to the spindle assembly. Now, on with the show...



1. Here, we've taken our freshly-lubed inner bearing (the larger of the two) and placed it in the center "cup" of the rotor assembly. Then, we've applied more grease under the seal, and gently tapped it home.



2. Check out those freshly de-greased and painted spindles! Yep, those are Old Glory originals, believe it or not. If you read our front end rebuild story, you'll see that we've totally removed our old spindles... Here, we're positioning the caliper mounting bracket. You'll need to make sure the mounting bracket bosses face towards the inside of the car. The brackets are marked right or left.



3. Next is the placement of the rotor splash shield. Like the brackets, these are marked right or left. The "hole" in the shield is where the caliper assembly will fit. Note that they must face the front of the car.



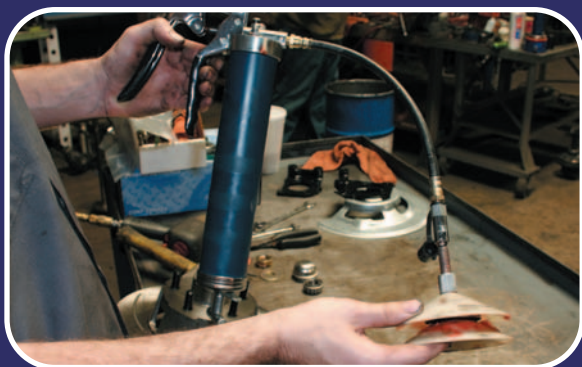
4. Secure the shield and bracket to the spindle with the grade 8 bolts provided in the kit. Note that the heads of the bolts are on the outside. Then tighten the locknuts (torque to 35-45 ft.-lbs.).

Lube those bearings!



Lubing up those wheel bearings is **CRITICAL**. You literally can't get enough of that wheel bearing grease packed into a bearing. Without it, things would grind to a halt, rather quickly.

Our photo shows the way most guys (or gals) would do it.



A step up would be to use a grease gun and a wheel bearing packer. This ensures the grease is evenly (and completely) packed into every orifice of the bearing.



5. The rotor and hub assembly is placed on the spindle as shown.



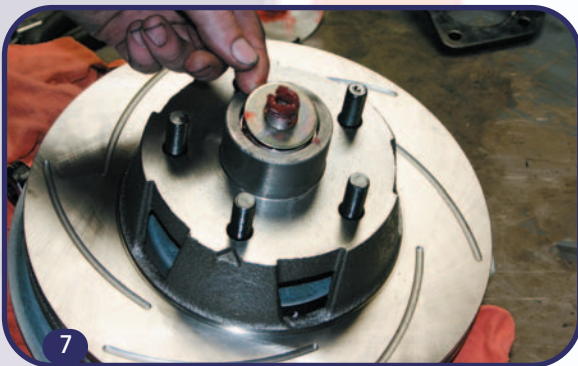
9. As per the photo, the cotter pin is inserted and bent. The grease cap should be packed (with you know what) and positioned.



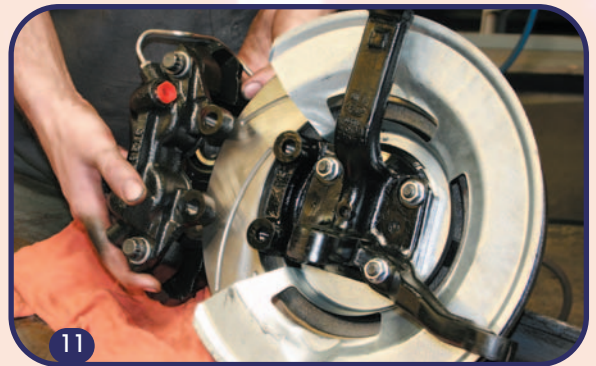
6. Pack and install the outer wheel bearing. Make sure you grease every square inch of that bearing and the top of the spindle.



10. We temporarily place a spacer over the grease cap and gently tap until it's secure. How many dented grease caps have you seen before?



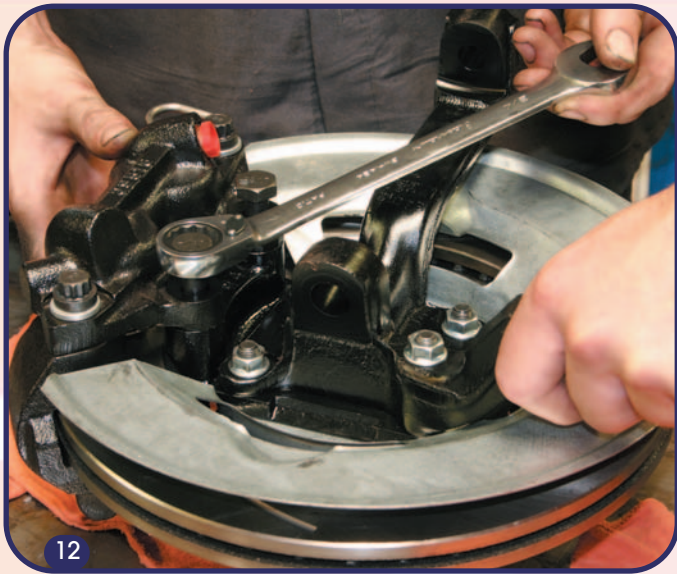
7. Place the washer as shown...



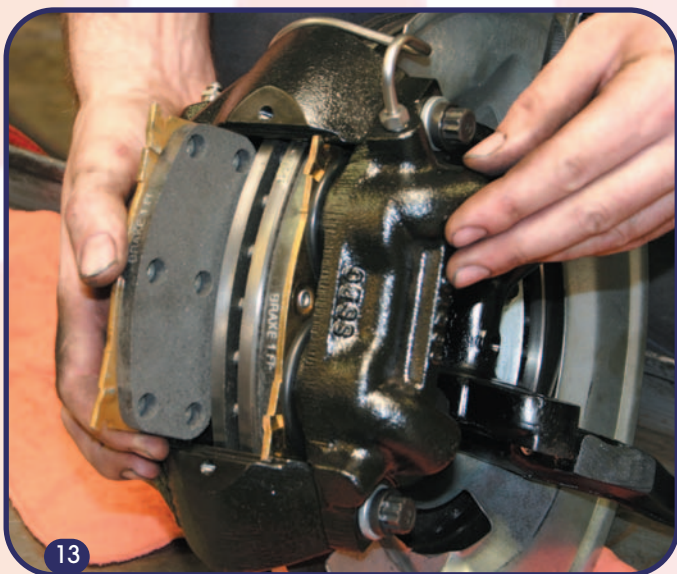
11. Next up, it's caliper assembly time. As per SSBC's **BOLDFACE** instructions, make sure that you keep hydraulic components free from dirt and debris. They can fail, miserably. This could be disastrous.



8. Here we're tightening the spindle nut. The procedure is described in detail in the kit instructions (and should be followed to the letter), but essentially the rotor should be rotated while the spindle nut is tightened (torqued to approx. 17-25 ft.-lbs.). The nut is then backed off 1/2 turn and retightened to 10-15 ft.-lbs. The nut should be positioned so that a set of slots are in line with the cotter pin hole.



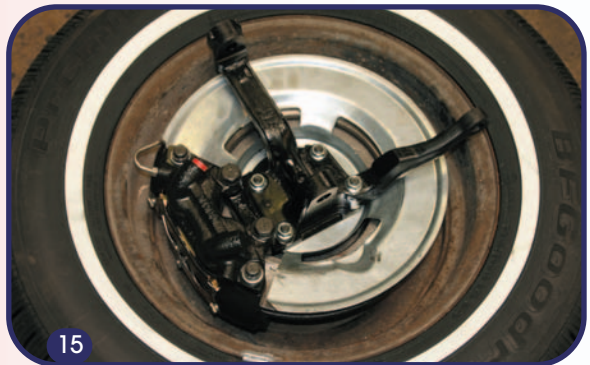
12. The caliper is mounted to the caliper mounting bracket, then secured with mounting bolts and lock washers. Torque to approx. 45-60 ft.-lbs.



13. Insert the pads into the caliper housing. It will be obvious (from the shape of the pad backing plate) how they fit.



14. Install the stainless steel retaining splash shield and secure with the retaining bolts and lock washers as shown. Torque to approx. 7-11 ft.-lbs.



15. Viola! We're done, and our new disc brakes fit perfectly (with room to spare) into our 15x5-1/2" T-Bird wheels.



16. We've already rebuilt our car's front suspension, and installed the new disc brake/spindle assembly (see our tech story on page 38). The new wheel/tire combo fits like a glove. Old Glory now has some beefier rubber (215/70s), and a bigger wheel to fill out that wheel well. In this story's next installment, we'll hook everything back up. Until then... LFM



SOURCES:

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