

INSTALLING DASH TRIM

By Ian Bowman

Arguably one of the most popular “easy” upgrades for ’55-’56 cars, Bel Air dash trim installs easily into any 150/210 trim level, dresses the dash up with little effort, and a small amount of cash. Someone cut holes in the dash for gauges back in the ’70s? It can be an easy fix for that just the same. Factory trim just became dull/dented over time? It’s easy to breathe new life into your dash! And you have options: you can use ’55 Bel Air trim, ’56 Bel Air trim, or some of the popular engine turned/billet aluminum options out there, they’ll all install the same way shown here.

As we’re showing this being installed on a new build, there’ll be a few steps MIA if you were doing this to a completed car. For starters, you’ll need to get the cluster loose; this will involve removing the lower column cover and lower column mount in order to drop the column, and move the cluster without scratching the column. With the column dropped, you can then remove the lower and upper mounting screws for the cluster.

Complete removal will not be necessary, you just need enough room to slip it under the chrome bezel. The knobs and the retaining nuts for the stereo will need removed, as will the speaker grille via two screws at the top, and two speed nuts located on the backside of the dash.

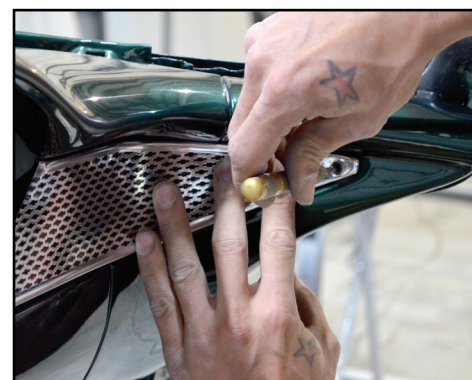
With those items tended to. We can move on to the Tech Talk at hand....



Factory 150 and 210 cars lack the screw hole in the corners of the dash necessary to mount the corner pieces of the dash trim. This is easily rectified

by simply (and carefully) drilling the hole. Obviously, if you’re simply replacing your trim, this step isn’t necessary. But, if you are indeed upgrading, start by holding your dash trim up, and finding exactly where it fits best.

Brian at Woody’s Hot Rodz is a fan of using a spring loaded punch for marking any holes to be drilled into steel. If one isn’t readily available to you, a marker will serve the same purpose.



With your hole marked, use a 1/8” drill bit to make your mounting hole.

This is where the “tips and tricks” aspect of this install comes into play. The crew at Woody’s uses 1/2”

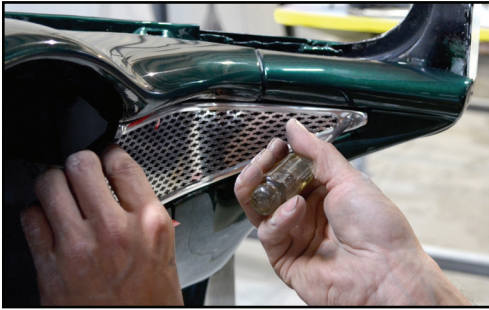


3M double-sided trim tape on the backside of each of the three pieces of the moulding. For one, this will keep the trim from rattling against the dashboard, and two, will help it stay in place no matter what.

No need to go overboard with it. Two strips, top and bottom, will be enough to make it stay put. Make sure to go around the corner of the corners with it for the best adhesion.



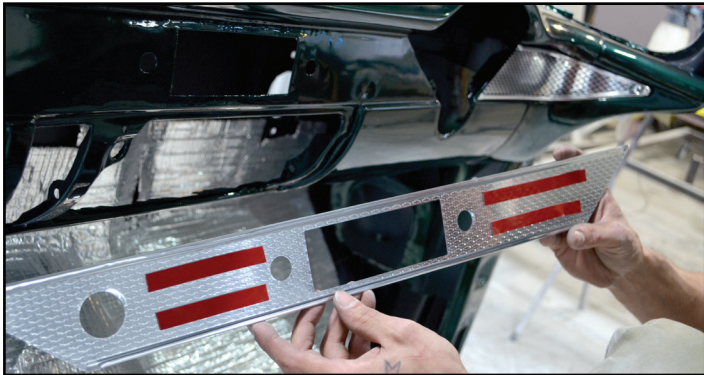
Peel a couple inches of the red backing tape away from the edge closest to the speaker opening,



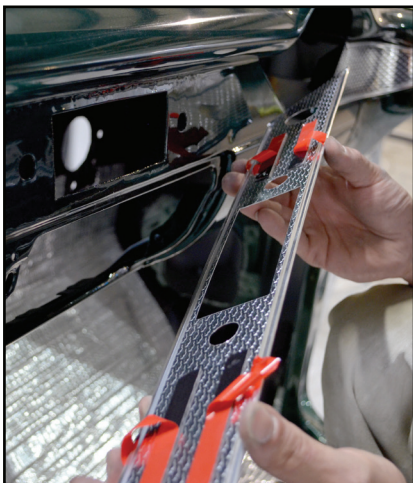
leaving enough to stick out past the edges of the trim, and line it up with the edge of the dash. Once lined up at the edge, press down at the exposed tape, and once pressed down, install the mounting screw provided in the kit.



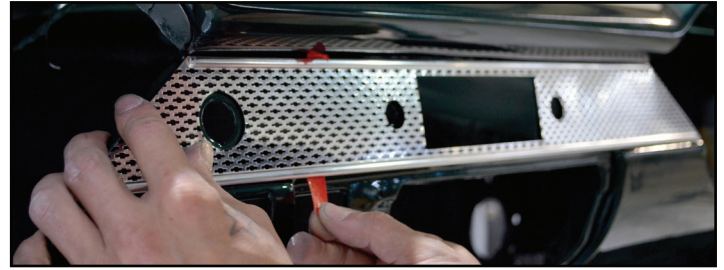
With the mounting screw installed, pull the tape away while pressing on the trim, working your way towards the screw.



The center will install the same way as the corners, minus the mounting screws, just with a little more tape to hold it in place. Ultimately, the radio post nuts will help keep it in place as well.



Peel back the tape again, working from the center of the trim piece out, making sure it comes past the edges so you can grab a hold.



You'll need to pay a little more attention here, as you'll be aligning the radio openings as well as the edges to the dash. Push down on the exposed tape and pull the red backing off, working towards the edges.

Repeat the process above for the driver's side corner.

And you're all done! Reinstall your cluster, radio, and speaker bezel, and enjoy a spruced up dashboard! 