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AUTO OFFERS

How-To

Change Rear Bearings Exchanging Mid-Year Rear Bearings Without Losing Your Rear

By Andy Bolig
 Photography: Andy Bolig

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Brake-rotor runout is a major concern on mid-year Corvettes, and owners often simply remove the trailing arms and have them rebuilt, having new bushings and rotors installed at the same time. Purchasing the necessary tools can be another reason for not attempting this task. You'll need a spindle-removal press, a spindle-bearing puller, a spindle bearing setup tool, and a rear-spindle installation tool. Total cost: about \$500. While we were at the Corvette Clinic, Chris Petris showed us that you can change the rear bearings without removing the trailing arms, with the right tools. Follow along as we show you how.

Once you've installed a new set of rear wheel bearings, and if you purchased the required tools, you have a pretty well-equipped toolbox. You know what they say: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; give him a fishing pole and you're supporting an addiction." Such it is with Corvetting!



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The car we were working on had knock-off wheels. We removed the wheels and also removed the hubs because we needed to loosen the emergency-brake shoes. If the rotor will come off without loosening the emergency brake, hub removal isn't necessary. This decreases the chance of excessive runout once the assembly is reinstalled.



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Removing the caliper is next.

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Chris uses retainer clips to hold the pistons back.



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Once the calipers are removed, he wraps some tape around them to keep the retainers in place. There is no need to loosen the brake lines; just put the caliper up out of the way.



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Our rotor was removed previously. (Note the rivets are already removed.) Luckily, they installed the rotor properly so we could get to the adjuster for the emergency brakes.



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We removed the bolts that hold the driveshaft to the hub.



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There should be retainers to keep the bolts from loosening accidentally.



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Remove the cotter pin and loosen the nut to remove the hub.



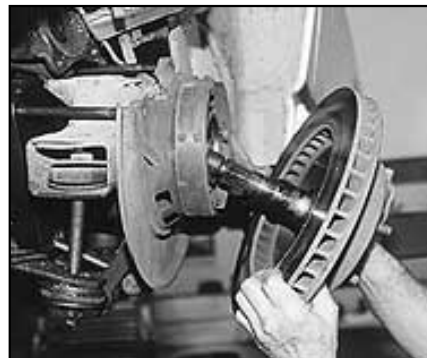
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With the hub removed, you can pry out the dust cover and seal.



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The main reason this job is farmed out is not having the tools to do the job properly, and they're available through the major advertisers in *Corvette Fever*. Having the proper tools means you can always do the job again later. This tool...



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...pushes out the spindle from the inner bearing without your having to pound it with a hammer.



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Here's another tool that makes this job much easier. It removes the outer bearing from the spindle.



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You can also see the sleeve and spacer that give the proper bearing preload.



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The races in the support hub are tapped out with a blunt punch.



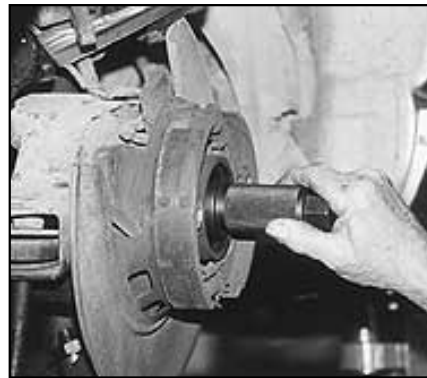
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The new ones are tapped back in place with a special tool that won't damage the surface of the bearing race.



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This tool allows you to check the bearing preload without having to press the bearings onto the spindle. The process is much easier with this tool if you need to change the spacer.



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Chris has many spacers and uses dial calipers to choose the proper one. He can "feel" the proper preload because

of his many years working on Corvettes.



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For the rest of us, the finished product should be between .001 and .008 inch of endplay.



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With the bearing preload set, Chris packs the bearings...



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...and installs them.



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This tool screws onto the spindle...



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...and pulls the inner and outer bearings onto the spindle with a nut against the hub.



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Once the bearings are installed, remove the tool and hub because you'll need to install the seal and dust cover.



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Install the hub and the castle nut. The drive-spindle nut should be torqued to 100 lb-ft. Don't forget to install the cotter pin. Also, install the driveshaft to the spindle hub.



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Before installing the brake caliper, check the runout. You should have no more than .005 inch of runout.



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Once the rotors have the proper runout, you can install the brake calipers again. Be sure to use lock washers for each of the bolts.



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Make sure when you install the knock-off wheels that the lugs don't go through the holes for the pins. Chris has seen several sets that were installed improperly. Take a little time to make sure it's right.

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