

Strut Rod Bushing Replacement

It is always easier to do things when you already have things a part. So, since I had the rear axle out of my car I was looking at the strut rods and found that the 50 year old bushings were worn out and what was left there was about the consistency of soft coal. When you take the strut rods off, check to make certain they are still straight and that the ends where the bushings go are not cracked or broken. Three of the four ends of my rods had the holes slightly elongated. I used a socket to check for roundness – I thought I could probably make the hole round again by clamping the rod in a vise and then using a hammer to pound the ends back into place. Then I thought --- well, maybe not. I was concerned that the casting might be brittle enough that a blow from a hammer might crack the thing rather than straighten it out. So, after a second look and, second thoughts, I decided that the holes were not elongated enough to worry about and I'm living with them! I clamped the strut rod in the vise and the used a deepwell socket of about the same diameter as the metal insert to drive it out of the rubber bushing. Once it was out, I could pry the rubber bushing out of the strut rod with a screw driver.



I had ordered a replacement bushing kit from Corvette Central and I wondered how I was going to install them when they arrived. I was concerned about getting them into the hole at the end of the strut rods without damaging the rubber. Well, apparently other folks had the same concern because the new bushing is made of three rather than two pieces. As you can see in this picture, the rubber bushing is in two parts – see the line in the middle of the bushing?



That allows you to separate the rubber bushing for installation. Here I'm driving the metal center section out using a socket to support the bushing assembly and a socket to push the metal center out. You have to put this back together so don't drive the center piece all the way out – once it has moved $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of an inch you should be able to separate the two parts of the bushing.



Now, I found that it helped to spray some Silicone lubricant in the holes at the ends of the strut rods – it makes it easier to slip the rubber bushing into the hole. I inserted one half of the bushing, then clamped the assembly in the vise to press the metal insert back into place in the rubber bushing. Hey, I don't have a press – so you use what ya got! Anyway, the vise process worked as you can see.





Now, no amount of pressure will make these new bushings as small as the originals. So, reinstalling them can be a bit of a chore. The end that mounts to the frame is no problem as that is merely a bolt and you can slip the bushed strut rod over the bolt and tighten the nut down.

However, the other end fits in a bracket welded to the axle case. Now – this can be a very tight fit. I used Silicone spray

lubricant again. And, I used a file to smooth the inside edge of the bracket so that it wouldn't catch the rubber bushing. That all worked on one side, but not the other – darn! I finally had to dig out my 18" adjustable wrench and bend the side of the bracket out slightly to get enough relief to get the rod and bushing into place. Once it was in place, I reinstalled the bolt and tightened it down. That drew the bracket back into place.

The finished item – looks like new.

