



Tech Talk



C-5 & C-6 Shifters

Source – Larry Rains – Retired Auto Mechanic Instructor

I have friends who think every time they drive their cars they have to race. They install MGW shifters and swear by them. My stock C-6 ZO6 shifter seems fine for my type of driving. In normal traffic, quick shifting is not a priority. However, my stock C-5 shifters need some help. I've tried some things that seem to help. I think that these mods will work on a C-6, also.

I take the shift knob off the shifter. If you've never done this, it is quite an experience. There is a key that must be removed; called the Demon key. There's a reason they call it that. I use needle nose vice-grips and a hammer for removal.

Next I drill out the leather shift knob. This is a trick also. I wrap the leather knob before placing it in a vice. If you clamp it too tightly will damage the leather. Too loose and the knob comes loose in the vice. Neither one is good. Use a 1/2" size bit to drill out the plastic knob. Try not to damage the threads.

Next step is to grind down the demon key. Too much and the key won't hold the shift knob. Not enough and the plastic cap on top of the shifter hits the key. You will need a die grinder and a trial and error method. This lowers the shift knob about 1". I know; shorter throw but requires more leverage. The leverage part we need to work on next.

You must raise the car. There is a detent plug to remove from the transmission. The plug is high on the passenger side. You cannot see it. You will need a 15/16 or 24 mm size socket. Once the plug is removed, you can install a 13/16 copper drain plug gasket. NAPA p/n 1366. The inside diameter is 3/4". I had to die grind the inside slightly to make it fit. I have found ZO6 transmissions need 2 gaskets and the standard transmissions need 1. This makes shifting easier without putting

undue stress on the synchronizers. Some people replace the detent plug with a standard plug; but I have never tried this.

The last step is transmission fluid replacement. The factory calls for Dexron ATF. I have replaced the ATF with Royal Purple Synchronax, with good results. Don't use this on older C-5's as they have fiber synchronizer blocking rings. They require ATF only. These tricks should make your shifting easier and less notchy. Hope this helps.