

1997-2004 C5 Corvette Shifter Installation

The C5 Corvette six-speed is an all-out blast to drive. With a solid linkage and a rear-mounted transmission, it's one of the best-engineered gearboxes available in a street car. Problem is, it doesn't take much to push the C5 Corvette shifter to its limits under hard driving. That's when shifter response and actuation can be challenging. Missed shifts and a lazy stick feel are very common and can become an instant source of frustration.

To address this problem, C5 Corvette owners should consider the installation of a short-throw billet shifter. We sampled Kirban's Kwik Six-Speed Shifter, which features solid billet construction and a 20% overall reduction in shift throws by using a shorter handle, thus altering the pivot geometry. Additionally, this shifter is engineered with heavier detent springs, allowing for a much crisper shifter action. Missed shifts are virtually eliminated.

Installation of this shifter is surprisingly easy. Remember that before you begin, please make sure the emergency brake is set and the shifter is in fourth gear. With some basic hand tools, you can install it in about 1 1/2 hours. We topped it off with a Kirban billet shift knob. The results were remarkable. We bought our C5 Corvette shifter from Zip Corvette Parts, 8067 Fast Lane, Mechanicsville, VA 23111, 1-800-962-9632.



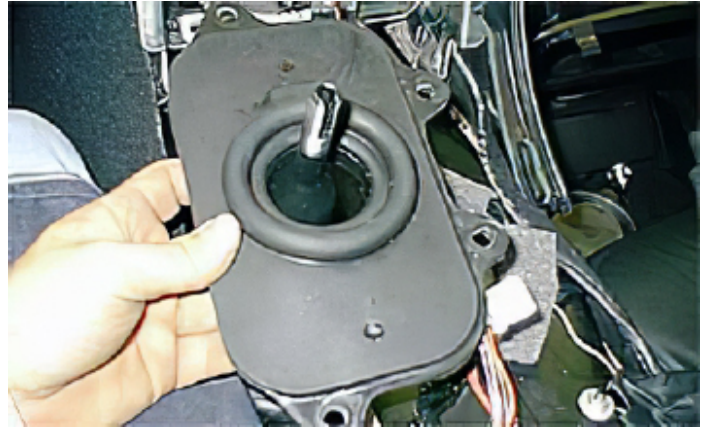
01: To remove your Corvette's shift knob, pry up the plastic shift pattern on the tip of the shift knob. Remove the aluminum pressure pin using a flat head screwdriver and needle nose pliers or vise-grips. Fasten the vise-grips to the pin and insert the screwdriver under the tab and pry up. If the pin won't move, use some spray lube or liquid wrench to loosen it. Once it's loose, unscrew the shift knob.



02: To remove your Corvette's center console, lift the center storage bin and locate the two plastic tabs at the rear of the bin. Lift off the plastic tabs to access the two 10mm nuts and remove them.



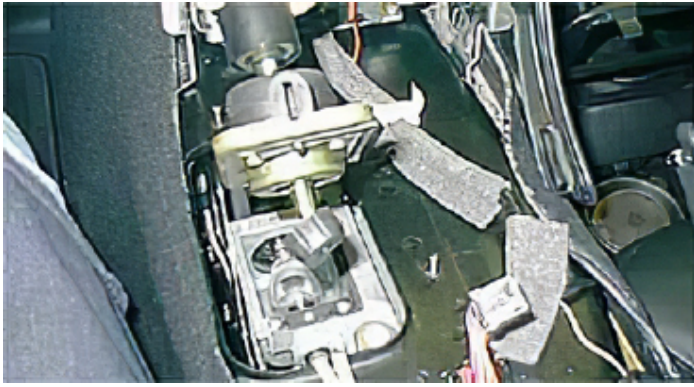
03: Remove the traction control button trim panel by gently prying up. Disconnect the traction control harness and the variable suspension selector harness (if equipped). Disconnect the accessory plug wiring harness and remove the two 10mm nuts. Now gently pry off the interior temperature sensor trim plate to the left of the ignition and remove the T15 torx screw. Lift the ashtray cover then remove the ashtray and the two T15 torx screws (If you have a convertible, you'll have to remove the waterfall. Unscrew the three T15 torx screws, one on top and one on each side of the base. Lift the waterfall straight up and set aside). Now slide the center storage bin towards the rear of the vehicle. Pop off the center console trim plate, disconnect the cigarette lighter harness and set aside. The shifter and shifter boot should now be exposed.



04: With the console top out of the way, you can now remove the four 10mm bolts on the rubber shift boot and lift the boot off.



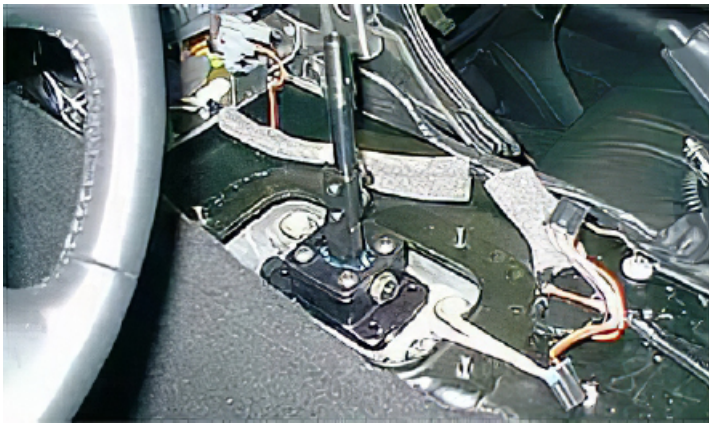
05: Then remove the four 10mm bolts at the base of the shifter and lift off. Use a razor blade to remove any old gasket material from the linkage-mounting base. Pop off the black plastic insulator on the bottom end of the stock shifter and install on your Kirban Kwik 6-speed Corvette shifter.



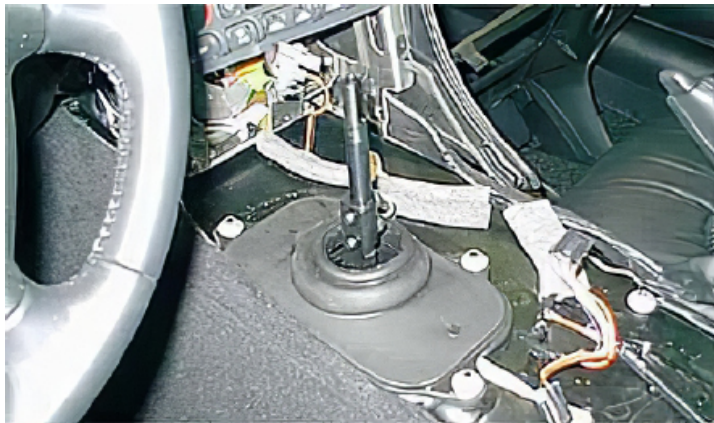
06: Apply a bead of silicone RTV to the base of the new Corvette shifter.



09: If you are keeping the factory shift knob, screw it on and replace the pressure pin. Use a soft mallet to drive in the pressure pin and you're ready to bang some gears!



07: Install the new C5 Corvette shifter with the 4 supplied bolts and hand tighten. Once they are hand tightened, then torque the bolts to 20-25 ft.-lbs. in a cross pattern.



08: To adjust the shift stops, engage the shifter into 1st gear and adjust the front stop, allowing room for a postcard to slip freely between the stop and the shift stalk. Repeat the process for 3rd gear. To adjust 2nd and 4th gears, repeat the process on the rear stop. Shift the new shifter several times in each gear so you are certain the adjusting screws are set properly. Reinstall the stock shift boot and then tighten the bolts. Replace the console trim panel and center console and reconnect all of the electrical connection harnesses. Tighten all bolts and screws.



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