



From the February, 2009 issue of Custom Rodder

It's a Swing Thing

A Swinging Pedal Power Brake Assembly for '49-54 Chevys

Frame-mounted master cylinders have always made sense on early rods because underhood space is at such a premium; not to mention the fact that street rod guys tend to like tidy firewalls. But when you start getting into custom bait from the late-'40s and early-'50s, swinging pedals and firewall-mounted master cylinders are often a more convenient option.

Todd Walton started thinking about such a setup for '49-54 Chevys after his brother Dane mounted a power booster and dual-chamber master cylinder under the floor of his '54 Chevy. The booster was one of the lowest components on the car, and one of the first things to scrape on speed bumps and driveways. It was an inconvenience at best, and a potential safety concern at worst; the car actually had to be towed home once when the booster was damaged enough to lock up the brakes.

As it happens, Todd's company, Walton Fabrication, was in the process of engineering a line of custom chassis components for '49-54 Chevys, so Todd put a swinging brake pedal assembly on his "to do" list. Well, it's done, and we thought you might be interested in checking it out.

The kit is quite impressive in its simplicity. A 1/8-inch-thick plate takes the place of an OEM access panel on the firewall, providing a mounting location for the booster and master cylinder. Extra strength comes from a bracket assembly that links the panel to the dash and provides a mount for the swinging pedal. A new dual-chamber master cylinder and 8-inch booster come with the kit and can be set up for drum/drum, disc/drum, or disc/disc applications. The master cylinder is actually an early Camaro-based part, making it easy to service or replace if needed.

In addition to the clean design, the kit is a breeze to install. It took Todd less than an hour to demonstrate for our cameras, and we're confident that most weekend warriors could do it just as quickly. And with the prospect of gaining a safe, slick brake setup that's simple to maintain and service, we don't know why you wouldn't want to.



A bracket is then bolted to the couplers and will serve to anchor the support brackets for the pedal assembly.



To make installation a one-man operation, Todd pre-assembled the brackets and firewall plate, leaving the bolts a little loose until it was all in the car.



The bracket assembly was then slid in place through the firewall.



Todd then crawled back under the dash to bolt the support brackets to the dash mount plate.



With the under-dash brackets bolted together, the firewall was secured using the supplied sheetmetal screws. All other hardware was cinched up at this time, too.



The power booster has a threaded, adjustable pushrod setup that needs to be assembled before the booster is bolted to the firewall bracket.



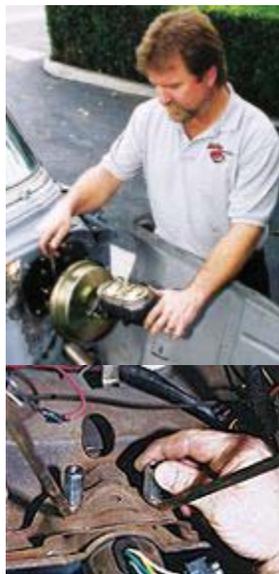
The master cylinder will still need to be removed and bench bled before the system is plumbed, bled, and put into service.



Back under the dash, the pedal arm can be bolted to its pivot (top) and secured to the pushrod.



And that just about wraps things up! As you can see, the pedal arm hangs in a natural, comfortable position that's right in line with the original brake pedal. Walton plans to have a pedal pad designed for the kit by the time you read this.



Two threaded couplers are added to the steering column mount bolts under the dash.



The complete kit comes with a new 8-inch booster, dual-chamber master cylinder, pedal arm, and all necessary brackets and hardware. Walton may make the bracket assembly available separately if there's enough interest.