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ACTUAL PARTS, YEARS AND BODY STYLES CONTAINED

IN THIS ARTICLE MAY DIFFER SLIGHTLY FROM YOUR APPLICATION. "

1955-57 STEERING SHAFT UPDATE FOR RACK & PINION STEERING



Randy Irwin - Technical Writer

Randy has been involved in the Chevy parts business for over 25 years. He is a wizard at creating, making and modifying custom parts for Chevys.

The Classic Chevy Rack and Pinion conversion was first introduced way back in December, 1993. This has become one of the most popular and most copied upgrades for your classic '55-'57. Our system uses a heavy-duty tubular crossmember which is far stronger than the stock steering system and all other rack systems on the market. You'll be amazed at how much better your classic drives, rides and handles with our rack kit! The rack and pinion unit is connected to the steering column with a simple two U-joint and shaft system making the installation very clean. Previous rack and pinion kits have required removal (cutting) of the steering shaft from your original steering box when using a non-tilt column. This "junked" a valuable original box. We have now developed an upper shaft to be used with the stock steering column that includes the correct splines and threads at the top for the steering wheel, is the correct length and has splines at the bottom to connect to the U-joint. This will make the installation of the rack and pinion far easier as there is no drilling or welding required.

Parts Needed:

53-158 U-Joint & Shaft Kit For Rack & Pinion Steering

(In addition, all of our non-tilt rack & pinion deluxe and mega kits now include this new u-joint system and the upper shaft.)

To order parts call 1-800-456-1957 or visit ClassicChevy.com

Tools Needed:

5/32" Allen Wrench
5/16" Drill Bit & Drill
7/16" Wrench
Hack or Chop Saw

Time Frame:

3-Hours

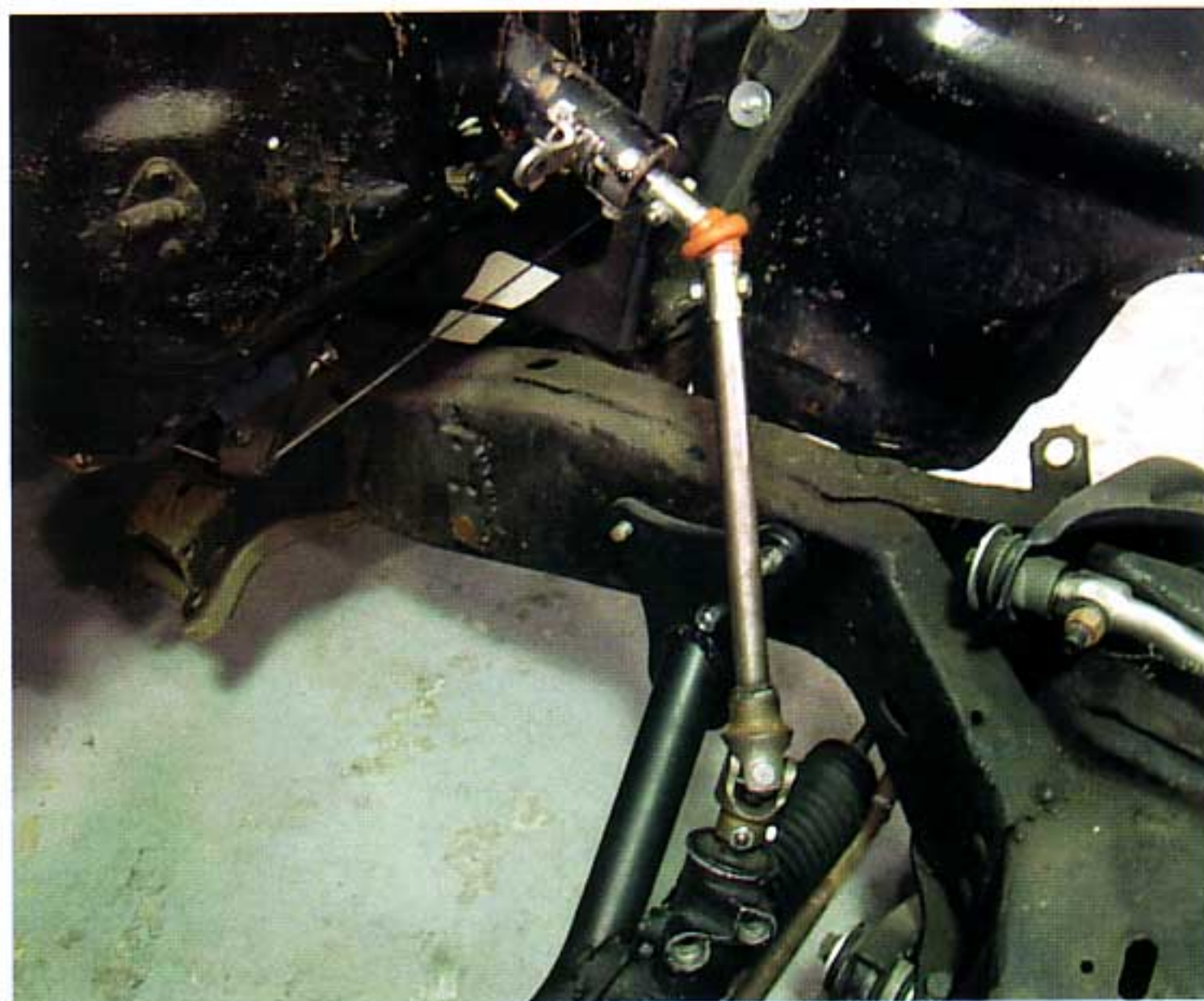


Photo #1: The original coupler shaft for the rack & pinion consisted of an upper and lower U-joint that coupled the original steering shaft, cut from the stock steering box, with the rack and pinion. This works well, but by cutting the stock shaft from the steering box the old box became junk. Good rebuildable steering boxes are getting harder and harder to find and are quite valuable to someone restoring an original car.

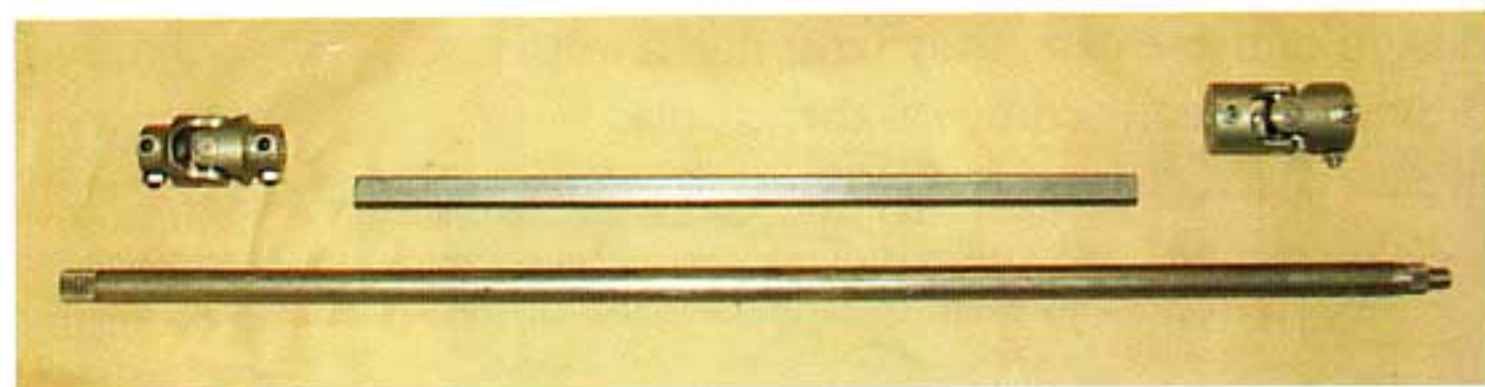
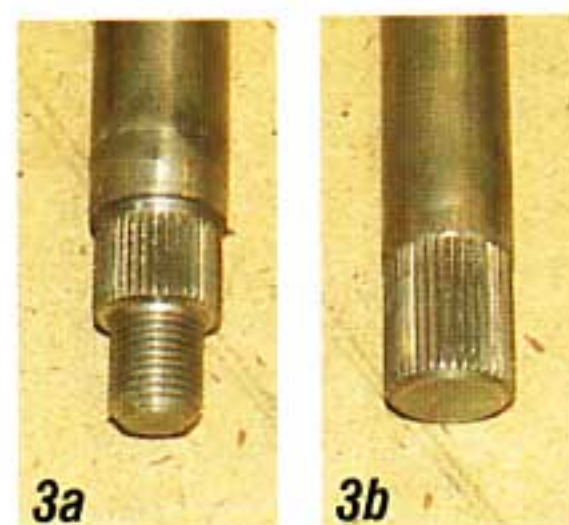


Photo #2: Kit P/N 53-158 includes a new steering shaft for the steering column, an upper and lower U-joint and a shaft that connects the two U-joints together. This new system is all held together with set screws and lock nuts so no need for welding!



3a

3b



3c

Photo #3a, 3b & 3c: The new column steering shaft accepts a stock steering wheel or any aftermarket wheel.

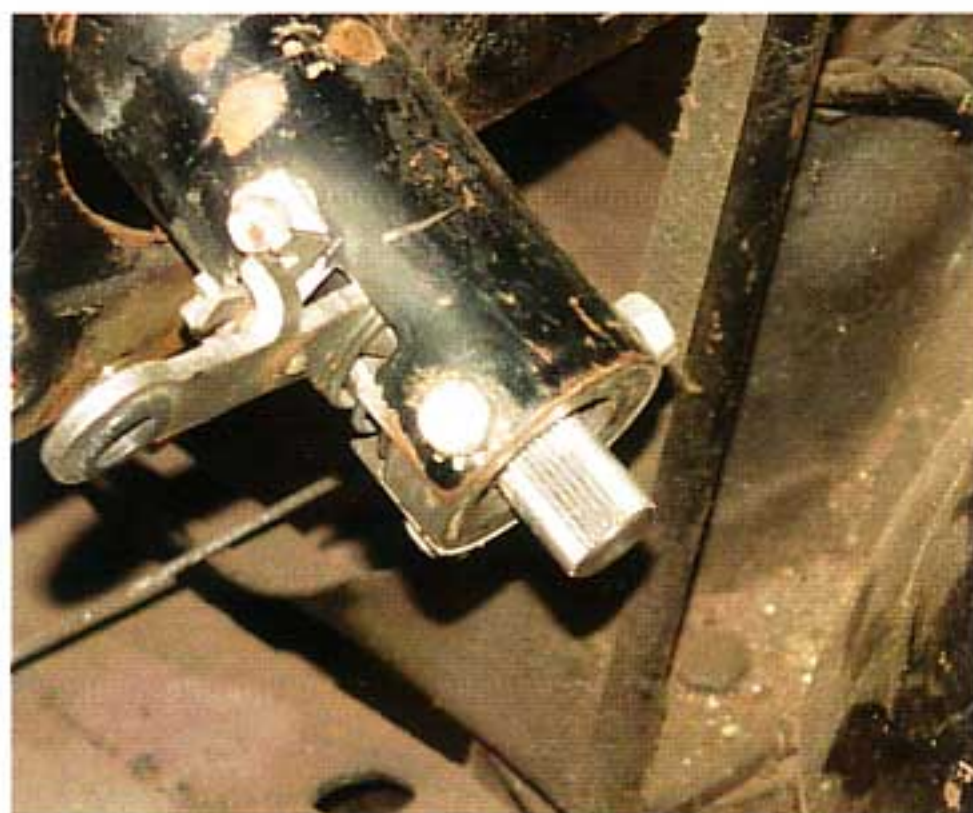


Photo #4: When the steering wheel is installed on the new steering shaft, the shaft will protrude out the bottom of the mast jacket about 1".

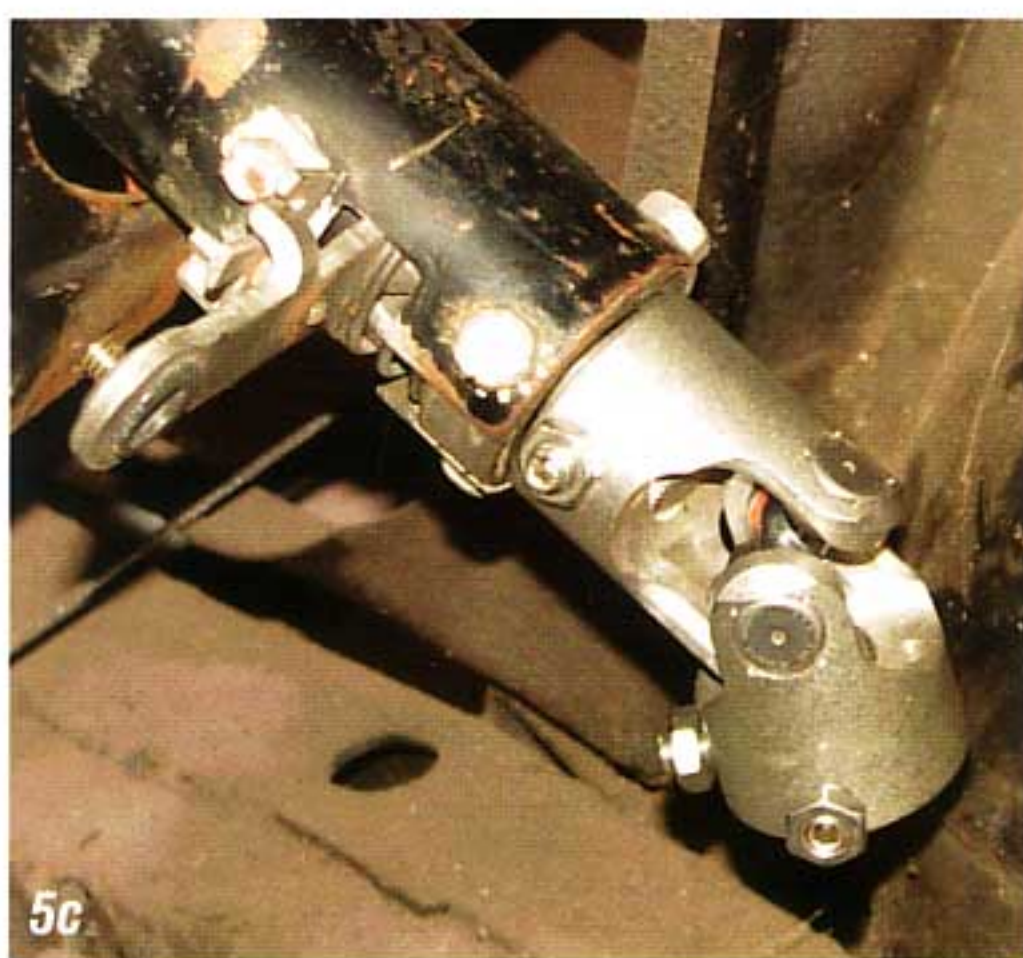


Photo #5a, 5b & 5c: The top half of the upper U-joint has a 3/4"-36 female spline that connects to the new steering shaft with a set screw and lock nut. The bottom half of the upper U-joint has a 3/4" female double D which connects to the new 1" double D shaft that connects to the lower U-joint at the rack and pinion.



Photo #6: The top half of the lower U-joint has a 3/4" female double D and the bottom half has a 17 millimeter female double D that connects directly to the rack and pinion unit. The U-joint is held to the shaft and rack and pinion with set screws and lock nuts.

Photo #7: Install the new double D shaft into the lower U-joint making sure the shaft is not installed too deep. If the shaft protrudes into the center of the U-joint, it will make contact with the cross in the U-joint and cause it to bind.

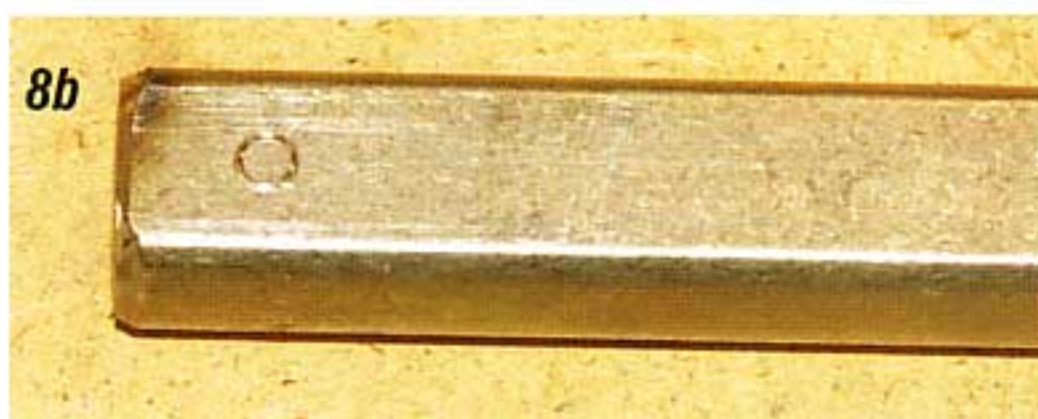
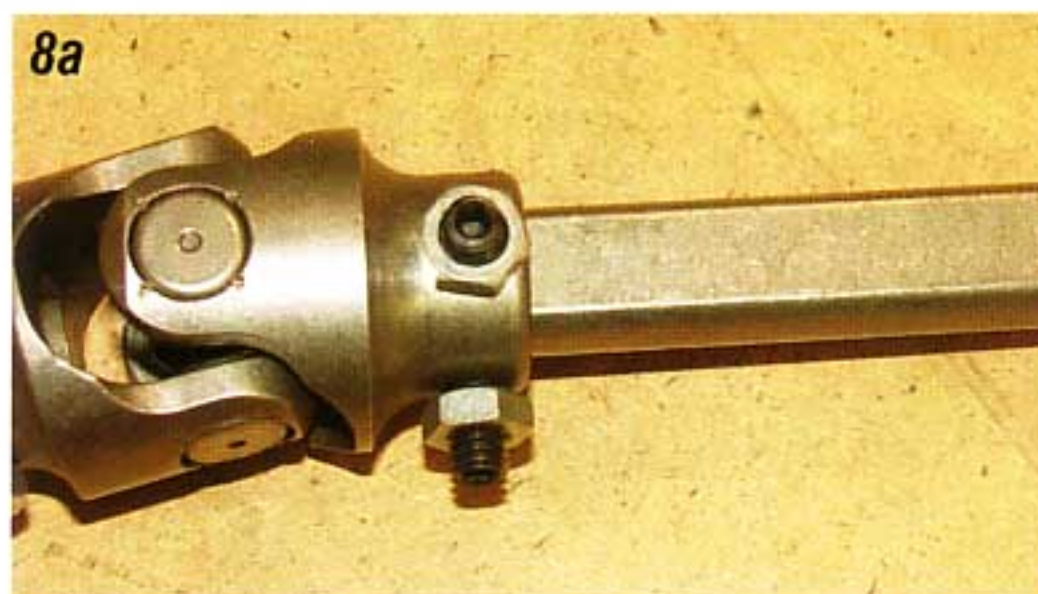


Photo #8a & 8b: Tighten the one set screw on lower U-joint that lines up with the flat on the 3/4" double D shaft. This will leave a mark on the shaft.

Photo #9: Using a 5/16" drill bit drill a small dimple in the flat of the shaft. This will give the set screw a place to seat.



Photo #10: There is a notch in the input shaft of the rack and pinion. One of the set screws from the lower U-joint needs to seat into this notch. This will positively locate the lower U-joint and will prevent the input shaft of the rack and pinion from causing a bind in the joint.



Photo #11: With the lower U-joint and shaft installed on the rack and pinion, place the 3/4" double D shaft next to the upper U-joint and mark the shaft where it will need to be cut. The shaft is made extra long to accommodate different types of steering columns.



Photo #12: The shaft is made of mild steel so a hack saw, band saw or chop saw will cut it with no problem.



Photo #13a & 13b: Once the lower shaft has been cut to length remove the upper U-joint from the main steering shaft and attach the joint to the top of the lower shaft. Next slide the main shaft up into the steering column mast jacket. Position the upper U-joint at the bottom of the mast jacket and slide the main shaft into the upper U-joint. Now with the upper U-joint in place tighten the set screw on the lower shaft making a mark on the shaft. Remove the lower shaft and drill a dimple with a 5/16" drill bit for the set screw.

Photo #14:
Install the lower shaft, main shaft and upper U-joint and tighten all set screws and lock nuts.
Good Luck! 