



## Upgrading Aftermarket Tilt Steering Has Many Advantages



### Classic Performance Products

By Shane Reichardt

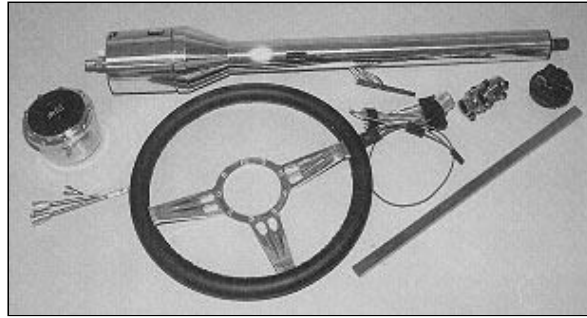
Adding a tilt steering column to your classic is a sure-fire way to increase your comfort level while driving. We thought we'd found this out when we came across a great deal on a factory tilt column at the local swap meet. Sadly, after installing the unit we realized that the factory tilt steering in our '64 Chevelle wasn't what we expected. There were a number of problems we ran into that eventually led us to give up on the factory tilt and go with a trick aftermarket unit from ididit, instead.

It may sound a little strange that someone with a coveted factory tilt steering column would want to exchange it for an aftermarket version. Given that fact that our vehicle was already modified and the problems that plagued the tilt column, losing originality wasn't a big concern. What were the problems with the factory tilt, you ask. For starters, years of use had made the unit sloppy.

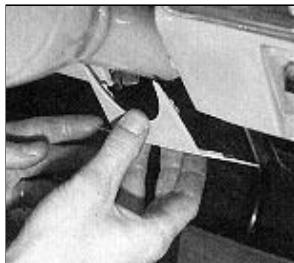
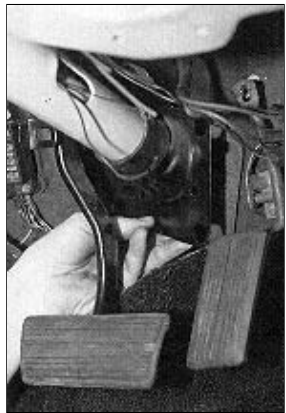
The inner workings needed to be rebuilt. In addition, the turn signal switch is obsolete and one of the hardest parts on the planet to locate (in our opinion). When we finally did locate a switch we found that after paying a fairly hefty price, the dam thing didn't even work. Attempts to make the best of two broken switches weren't much more successful as the switch would work until you changed position of the column. Faced with the fact that failure to use turn signals in Southern California could get you shot by an overstressed driver, we started looking for a suitable remedy (and swapping back to the standard column wasn't an option). The search wasn't a long one as our first choice was Classic Performance who sells ididit products. Ididit is a company that prides itself in making top quality, bolt-in replacement tilt steering columns.

In recent months ididit has added new tilt columns to their product line to fit most popular classic Chevys and Classic Performance sells them all. We had Classic Performance get a polished aluminum ididit tilt column, LeCarra steering wheel (to replace our factory bus-like steering wheel) and everything else we would need for the conversion ready and brought them our '64 Chevelle. Though Classic Performance doesn't normally do installation work they wanted to prove how easy the swap was. It must be fairly easy as nearly every employee at Classic had an ididit column on their vehicle. The staff cars included a Nova, a Chevelle and a wide range of trucks. The installation was fairly straight forward with the only difficulty being adaptation of the intermediate shaft. We also made a minor modification (by drilling an extra hole) in the mounting of the ididit column to position the steering wheel as far away from the driver as possible. Follow along and judge for yourself just how simple it is to get tilt steering in your classic.

Here's everything we used to make the conversion. The steering wheel is from LeCarra, the universal joint is a top notch Borgeson piece and from ididit we used their tilt column, Billet levers and knobs as well as a steering wheel adapter. The ididit column comes with a wiring harness adapter that plugs into your factory wiring. Everything shown is available from Classic Performance Products.



First things first. We removed the stock steering wheel.



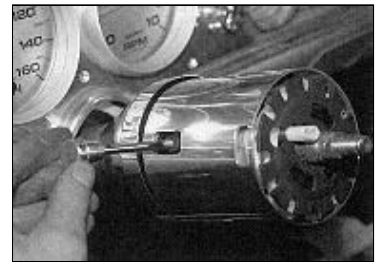
Then the under dash trim and firewall plate were unbolted.



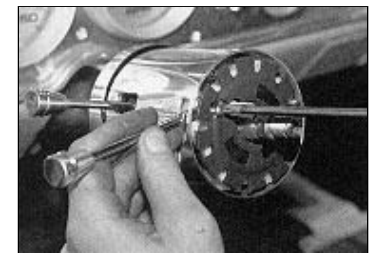
Using the factory rubber seal, the firewall plate was installed to the new column.



Then the column was Bolted in place.



The tilt control lever is also screwed in



Installing the turn signal lever requires only a Phillips screwdriver and was a snap.



Most steering wheels will require an adapter such as this one from ididit. It's secured just like a factory steering wheel.





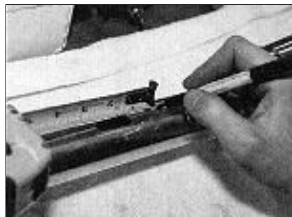
In the engine compartment we removed the bolt that holds the steering column to the rag joint.



Then the dash support strap was unbolted and the column was removed.



This photo shows a standard column (top), a factory tilt column (middle) and a new ididit tilt column (bottom). We installed a polished aluminum column but if you wanted to maintain an original look, you could paint a steel ididit column.



After test fitting the ididit column we decided that it positioned the steering wheel pretty close to the driver: Though this may not be a problem for some, we decided to move it forward a little. This would make it fit tighter



And the firewall plate was reinstalled.

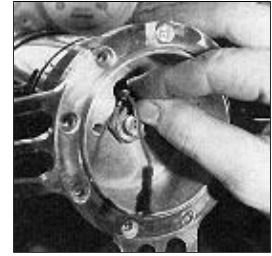


Moving to the engine compartment, the Borgeson universal joint was installed on the column shaft. Columns from ididit feature a shorter than stock shaft necessitating the use of an intermediate shaft. Instructions for measuring for the new shaft are included with the kit when ordered from Classic Performance.



Though there are a number of methods for getting the right intermediate shaft, Classic Performance prefers to sell a piece of double D bar stock that can be cut to size by whomever is installing the parts.

The LeCarra steering wheel is secured to the adapter hub with nine Allen head screws.



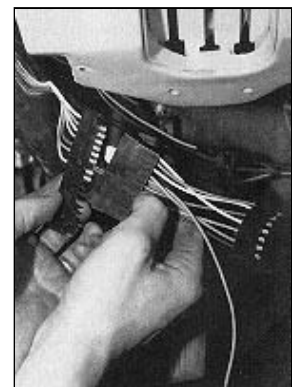
To make the horn wiring connection a special adapter is available though we found that it might have been just slightly easier to install the adapter before installing the steering wheel.



The horn wire plugs onto the back of the horn Button. We opted to upgrade to a Billet Born Button from Classic Performance.



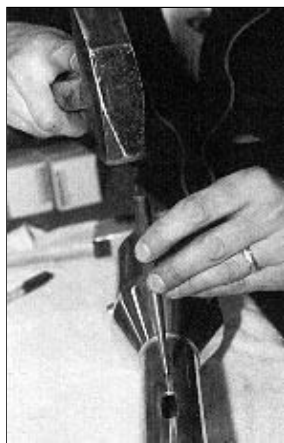
The new horn Button simply slips into place.



The wiring adapter plugs into the column harness...

to the dash as well. We determined that moving the locator hole an inch and a quarter towards the steering wheel the column would still fit without hitting the custom dash (as installations vary you should test fit any part before making modifications).

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To ensure the drill bit didn't wander on the round surface Classic Performance used a punch to mark the proper location.

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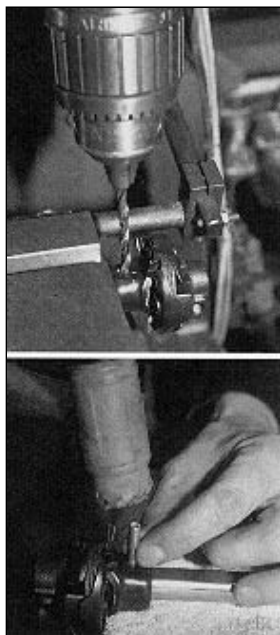
Then a 1/2-inch drill was used to make a new alignment hole.

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To get the tightest possible seal around the new column, Classic Performance recommends slotting the factory firewall plate and using a hole-style clamp to hold the seal firmly in place.

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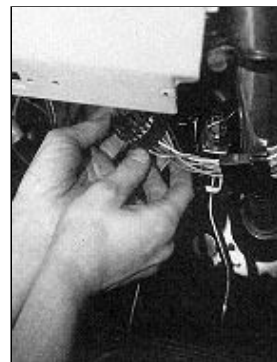
A low cost option offered by Classic Performance is to use the rag joint from a mid-'80s mid size Chevy vehicle. If you are going to a junk yard to look for one you will have to cut off the excess shaft, leaving just the rag joint. You can also order one already modified to fit from Classic. For added safety we drilled through the rag joint and the intermediate shaft and installed a roll pin. This insured that the shaft does not separate from the joint.

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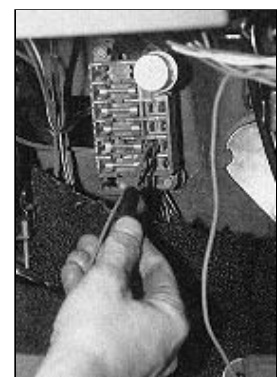
Next the rag joint, intermediate shaft and new Borgeson joint were installed.

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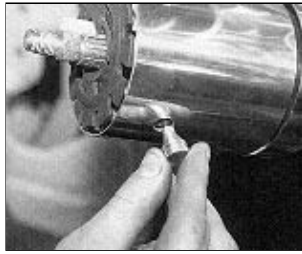


...and the factory wiring harness with ease.

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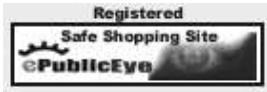


The installation was completed by plugging the wiring harness power lead into the fuse panel. Then everything was given a final check and the car was taken for a spin to ensure the steering wheel was on straight. Though this installation was on an early Chevelle the process is nearly the same for any car or truck and Classic Performance should be able to get you anything you need to make the conversion.



With work under the hood completed attention was turned again to the interior where we installed the hazard flasher knob first. A hazard flasher is one more advantage to swapping to the ididit column.

**Classic Performance Products 378 E Orangethorpe Ave., Placentia CA 92870 Tech Line 714-522-2000**



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