

Cruise Control Kit Self-Installed in 2 hours

This Saturday (July 21, 2001) I successfully installed cruise control in my 2001 Prius. If you're moderately handy and don't want the hassle or expense of getting a dealer to do it, you should consider doing it yourself.

The kit from <http://www.ToyotaPartsNow.com> cost me \$175 including shipping. I ordered it on Tuesday and it arrived on Thursday. It includes a complete new steering wheel, so you don't have to modify your existing steering wheel as others have done.

Not having an automotive tool set, I had to spend an additional \$38 at Sears to get a 14 mm crows foot wrench, a Torx T30 driver and a steering wheel puller. I didn't bother with a torque wrench but instead tightened things up with about the same force it took me to undo them.

The whole installation took me two hours. I was really, really careful at each step, so I can imagine someone who has done it before getting done in an hour. I half followed the instructions that came with the kit but made some deviations inspired by the excellent descriptions by Ozone House at <http://www.glyphic.com/ozone/prius/> and some general engineering judgement.

Your mileage may vary and, of course, I take no responsibility for whatever you decide to do.

Stop Light Switch Replacement.

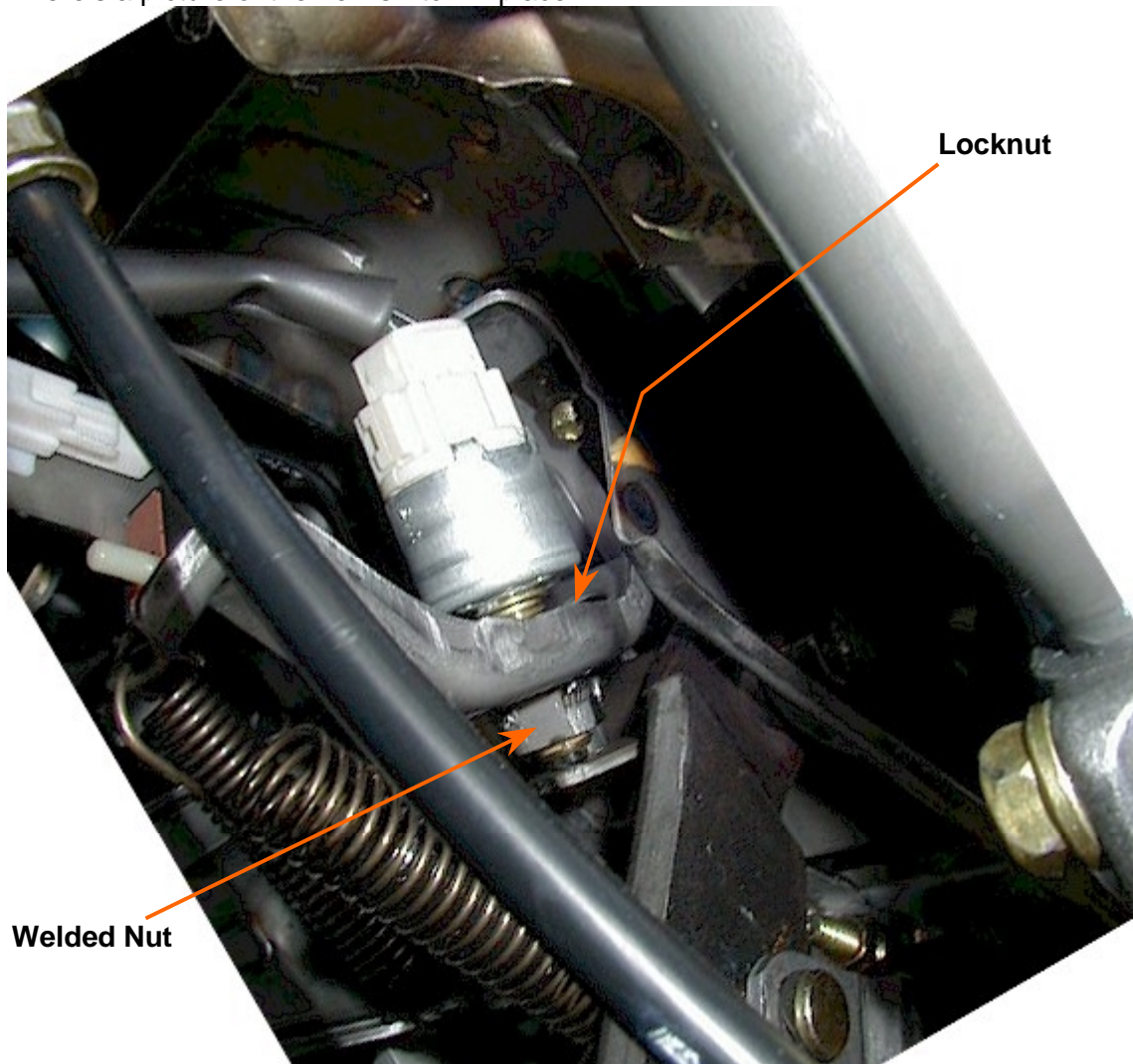
I did this first. I didn't disconnect any batteries and, contrary to the instructions, I didn't disassemble the dash. Also, I didn't use extreme measures like grinding off the welded nut as recommended by Ozone House. I simply reached up, around and over the mounting bracket with a crows foot wrench and loosened the locknut. Here's a picture of my 14 mm crows foot wrench assembled on my 1/2 inch socket driver with a short extension and 3/8 inch adapter, plus the old switch:



After getting the wrench on the nut and holding it in place with one hand, I thought carefully about which way to turn (clockwise) and gave a good tug on the driver with the other. I felt the nut turn and the switch then unscrewed by hand. Maybe I was lucky. There are discussion group posts that make getting at that nut look *much* more difficult than I found it. If you have trouble, I think a proper 3/8 inch drive would work even better than my clunky 1/2 inch drive and adapter.

After screwing in the new switch, I ran the nut up against the back of the bracket by hand and reversed the above process. Of, course, I adjusted the switch first. I decided to have the brake light come on with a pedal depression near the minimum to be sure that the cruise control would cancel with the first touch of the brake.

Here's a picture of the new switch in place:



The problem is that you have to get at the locknut in a limited space from the left of the picture where the bracket is not bent over. Still, it worked fine for me.

Steering Wheel Replacement.

I did this second. I disconnected the auxiliary battery negative side by unscrewing the chassis connection. This seemed easier and just as effective as messing with the battery terminal itself and involved less disassembly. To make sure it didn't touch the chassis and reconnect, I stuffed the end of the wire in a plastic bag and taped it up securely. I didn't disconnect the main battery. I waited much, much longer than the recommended 90 seconds before removing the air bag.

The rest went according to instructions. If you find the included instructions a bit terse (e.g. "remove the steering wheel using the steering wheel puller"), take a look at Ozone House's description and all will be clear. Just skip over all the stuff about modifying the old steering wheel because you have a complete new one with the switch already on it.

General Note

All electrical connectors have some locking device to make sure they don't fall apart. You need to find this and poke or squeeze it to separate plug and socket. Don't be tempted to just pull hard or you'll be in trouble.

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