

TMI Products Sport XR Seat Upgrade

Improve driving comfort and interior appearance with TMI's Sport XR seating

As much as we love to drive our vintage Mustangs, it is a well-known fact that a drive of any distance starts to get the backside burning. A vintage Mustang can certainly be made more comfortable; just give the Internet a quick search and you'll see plenty of owners upgrading to late-model Mustang seats or even aftermarket performance seating. Sometimes you can find a deal on used Mustang seats, but generally aftermarket seats are going to run several hundreds of dollars, not including the required mounting brackets.

TMI Products has offered concours quality interior parts, including upholstery kits, headliners, door panels, and

more, for over 20 years. Their Sport upholstery line, introduced several years ago, was TMI's first salvo in upgrading the vintage Mustang's interior with an eye towards extended driving comfort while retaining a stock appearance. The Sport seat upholstery and matching foam (with enhanced bolsters) offered firmer seating that supported the back and thighs while the bolsters enhanced spirited driving for track days (or that favorite highway on-ramp). The Sport line sold well and expanded to door panels, package trays, and add-on consoles for the Mustang.

Recently, TMI has added to the Sport series with their new Sport X and Sport XR upholstery, which debuted

at the 2013 SEMA show and will be available by the time you read this from any TMI dealer. The Sport X upholstery and foam series includes more aggressive bolstering in stock-appearing sew patterns, and is available in all stock Mustang interior vinyl colors with French seam contrast stitching instead of the stock Sport upholstery's OE piping. Matching door panels are available in the Sport R line as well. The Sport XR takes the Sport X up a notch to something a bit sportier in appearance, yet still uses the stock Mustang seat frames (like all Sport-based TMI kits). The Sport XR updates include unsuede inserts, stainless styling rings down the middle of the sew pattern (in



bright or black stainless) with contrast color behind the rings, and optional custom vinyl colors and patterns like perforated, carbon fiber look, and more. Even leather is available for those wanting the best.

Taking your stock interior up a notch for comfort and style is simply a matter of contacting TMI and discussing the various trim options and colors and then waiting for the big brown truck to show up at your door



1 We'll be completely stripping out Brian's basic black interior for fresh carpet and other items to go with the new TMI Sport XR upholstery. Getting underway, Brian removes the front buckets by extricating the four 1/2-inch retaining nuts (per seat) from under the floor pan first. The back seat will be recovered to match the Sport XR front buckets and will need to be removed as well. The bottom cushion simply lifts out while the seatback is retained by two large bolts at the bottom into the floor pan sheet metal.



2 With the seats out of the way, Brian moves on to carpet removal. The carpet is retained by the rear quarter trim panels, door sill plates, and the kick panels. After removing these items, the carpet can be pulled up and removed.



3 Because TMI's new Sport X door panels tie in perfectly with its seat upholstery and cover the complete door shell (perfect for doors with rusty or worn smooth grain patterns), we'll be adding them to Brian's interior upgrade. For that reason, the old panels get the heave-ho as well.



4 Upholstery work is all about getting the material in place and secured. It takes some arm and hand strength, a warm day (or careful use of a heat gun) to make the vinyl soft and pliable, and most importantly a pair of hog ring pliers and plenty of hog rings. These pliers and hog rings are from Eastwood. Expect to use 200-300 hog rings for a full interior set.



5 If you've never tackled upholstery work before, we recommend starting with the rear seatback, as it is the easiest to recover, allowing you to slowly get the hang of things. You will need to remove all of the hog rings retaining the current upholstery. Hog ring cutters or a pair of pliers (twist and pull motion) will be your friends here.

6 Slip the new upholstery over the seatback frame and crimp a few hog rings in each corner. You want to catch the edge of the upholstery with the hog ring so it is secured through the holes in the perimeter of the seatback frame. Flip the seatback over and ensure the upholstery is straight. If not, cut the hog rings and reposition. If the upholstery is straight, then continue hog ringing the rest of the upholstery edges.



7 For the rear seat bottom cushion, the steps are the same as the seatback cushion except you will find the upholstery secured to the frame via listing wires, one on each side of the center hump. Fold the old upholstery back to find the hog rings and remove them to free the upholstery.



8 Remove the listing wires from the stock upholstery and slip them into the listing loops in the new TMI upholstery, then secure the new upholstery as shown. Pull the upholstery down over the seat bottom frame and adjust as necessary to ensure it is straight before securing with more hog rings.



9 With the rear seatback and bottom completed, it is time to move on to the more complicated bucket seat upholstery work, which includes changing the foam. Begin your tear down by removing the seat tracks. Carefully remove the seat track return spring and then move the track slides as necessary to access the four retaining screws (per seat).



10 Remove the seat side shield/pivot trim on the bucket seat and disengage the pivot pins so the seatback and bottom assemblies can be separated. It is easier to separate them if you fold the seatback forward and use a large screwdriver or pry bar to separate the two halves.



11 Working on the seat base first, remove the perimeter hog rings so the upholstery can be pulled up over the frame and stock seat foam, as shown here. Alternatively, you can also cut away the old upholstery.



12 Pull the seat foam up to find the hog rings securing the foam to the seat frame. Remove these hog rings as well so that all you have left on your work surface is the seat base frame.



16 To work the upholstery over the larger Sport XR bolsters, a section of plastic (trash bags or grocery bags work perfect for this) is placed over each bolster, which allows the upholstery to easily slip over the foam instead of being grabbed by it.



13 The new TMI Sport XR foam is cut to sit over the main seat frame hoop. There is no provision to hog ring the new foam to the seat frame, but it isn't really necessary.



17 As you secure the upholstery to the seat bottom frame, ensure the seat foam is seated over the frame. Looking at the seat bottom from the side, you should clearly see the foam's edge. If you see or feel the seat frame, the upholstery needs to be pulled back and the foam properly seated.



14 The new TMI Sport XR upholstery uses listing wires to secure the upholstery (just like the original seats), but the lengths are different. You'll be better off making new listing wires from wire rod (uncoated wire coat hangers work great), just make sure to put a small loop in the ends of the rods to prevent upholstery damage/poke through.



18 Use a pick tool or scratch awl to locate the seat back adjuster stop and reinstall it as shown. Use a razor blade to carefully cut the required holes for the two pivot pins as well.



19 Moving on to the seatback, the upholstery and foam are completely stripped from the frame just as we did with the seat bottom. Adding TMI's optional headrest kit is a breeze at this point; simply cut away the burlap at the top of the seatback frame and bolt the headrest adapter into place as shown.



15 Hog ring the listings into the seat foam (you'll see spots in the foam where the attaching rod is visible) and verify the upholstery is straight on the foam.



20 Install the new Sport XR foam and upholstery to the seatback following the same steps as previously outlined for the seat bottom. Use a long pick tool or scratch awl through the headrest bracket to locate the headrest guide locations and install the guides.



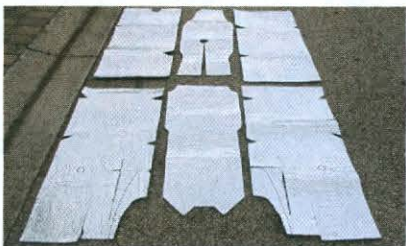
21 Locate the seatback cover retaining holes and use a large Phillips screwdriver in a twisting motion to cut the upholstery away. Transfer your old retaining clips to the new TMI covers and snap them into place.



22 Before installing TMI's new full Sport X door panels, a QuietRide Solutions' WeatherShield kit was added. The WeatherShield kit includes sound dampener strips for the door skin and foil vapor/moisture barriers for the door panel area.



23 The TMI Sport X door panel is a new molded plastic door panel covered in matching materials to complement the Sport X and XR seat upholstery. They fit the Mustang door shell perfectly. Installation requires high-bond adhesive tape and/or upholstery screws with finishing washers. For this installation, tape was used at the top with screws along the bottom edge. You will also need '65-'66 Pony-style door pull cups, inserts, and mounting brackets to complete the door panel install.



24 We also sourced QuietRide Solutions' AcoustiShield insulation kits for the floor, trunk, and body areas. Shown here is the floor kit. Each kit is incredibly complete with pre-cut insulation, sound dampening strips, spray adhesive, and foil sealing tape with fully illustrated instructions.



25 The sound dampening strips are applied to the clean bare floor pan first. The strips are pre-cut and labeled for placement; just follow the diagram in the instructions. Place the strips accordingly and then use a roller to firmly press them into place.



26 After the insulation sections have been glued into place, use the included foil tape to fully seal the edges of the insulation to the body and to cover all seams between the insulation sections.



27 With the floor and trunk insulation complete, including a new insulated rear seat divider and insulation under the new vinyl wrapped TMI package tray, the freshly upholstered rear seat and vinyl wrapped quarter trim panels are reinstalled along with new premium cut pile carpet, also from TMI.



28 Once the front carpet is installed along with new speaker kick panels and the original door sills, the new TMI full length console is laid into place. The front of the console wedges nicely under the dash and at the rear we fastened a small bracket inside the console to secure it to the floor pan. The console features large cup holders, a front storage bin, and a rear storage cubby with armrest.



29 The final piece of the interior puzzle, the Sport XR front buckets, are set into place and secured with the original mounting hardware. TMI tells us that later this year you will be able to purchase completely assembled seats, saving the hassle of upholstery installation and dealing with old, cracked, broken, and rusty seat frames.



30 Brian added a few additional touches of his own during the interior upgrade, including fresh paint on the dash, a new Retrosound in-dash stereo with new Pioneer speakers and amplifier, and Lokar window cranks/door handles. A TMI one-piece headliner was installed as well and readers can look forward to a separate installation story on that in an upcoming issue.

with your new interior. The foam and upholstery install with hog rings like a stock seat upholstery kit, so installation is certainly a DIY-affair.

The '65 Mustang seen here has an aging stock black interior that severely detracts from the lightly restomodded exterior's looks. Owner Brian Stilwell first considered replacing the interior with the stock upholstery, or even upgrading to the Mustang's Interior Décor group with Pony seats and door panels, but like the exterior, Brian wanted to customize it without losing the instantly recognizable classic looks. Upon seeing photos of TMI's new Sport X and Sport XR interior products, Brian knew exactly how to take his interior to the next level with new upholstery, door panels, and even one of TMI's new Sport consoles. Brian ordered TMI's Sport XR upholstery in black vinyl/unisuede with a center contrast stripe to match his Mustang's Poppy Red exterior color and we tagged along, camera in hand, to see how easy it can be to go from worn and torn to fresh and firm. The results speak for themselves!

SOURCES

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