

FREE HEADLIGHT FIX

By Brent Franker

(<http://www.bfranker.badz28.com/headlightfix/index.htm>)

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INTRO:

I decided to put together this page after seeing the question "My left/right headlight makes a terrible noise for about five seconds after it lowers... what's wrong?" asked several times. So, if it sounds like the entire front end of your car is about to explode for a few seconds when you turn your lights off, read on and possibly save yourself some \$\$\$:)

If you've had your car to the dealer for this problem, they probably told you the headlight motor was bad and you needed a new one. Then, when they gave you the price, your mouth fell to the floor and you turned around and walked out. These "little" motors are not cheap. I believe they cost around \$200 EACH! Even Dal's price at Lambert Buick (best and most inexpensive place to buy GM parts AFAIK!) is well over \$100 each. What the dealers don't know (or maybe don't want you to know :) is there is a very easy FREE fix for this problem that works 9 out of 10 times. You see, nothing is actually wrong with the motor itself... the problem is a plastic gear inside of the housing has stripped. The really good news is that only half of this plastic gear is being used! Yep, full travel of the headlight from down to up then back down again uses exactly 1/2 of the plastic gear because the motor shaft only turns 180 degrees to raise the headlight then turns the opposite direction (180 degrees again) to lower the light. There is a very easy process that enables you to use the "other" side of the gear. Since I recently bought a digital camera, I thought I might as well put it to good use and make an illustrated guide on exactly how to perform this "fix." :) I'll try to make it detailed enough that, if needed, this page could make the "for Dummies" series :-)

(STEPS BEGIN ON PAGE 2)

STEP 1:



1. Start with the headlight in the down position. Remove the plastic (or sometimes rubber) cover over the headlight motor assembly and use the Manual Raise/Lower knob to raise the headlight to the full up position.

STEP 2:



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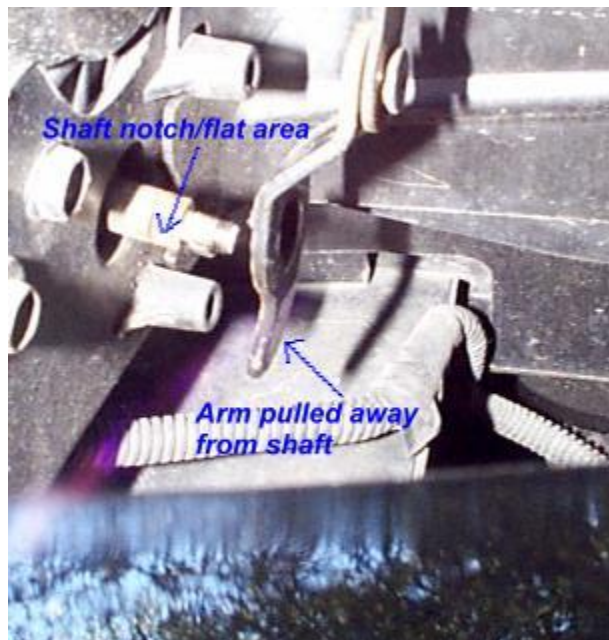
2. With the headlight fully raised, remove the four screws holding the plastic trim piece that goes around the headlight. This is being removed to provide for easier access later on. Two of them can be seen in the picture to the left. The other two are on the opposite side.

STEP 3:



3. Now that the trim piece has been removed, access to the headlight motor shaft "end nut" will be easier. The next step is to remove the motor shaft nut so that the headlight raise/lower "arm" can be pulled away from the motor shaft. For now, only remove the nut.

STEP 4:



(CONTINUED FROM STEP 4, ON PAGE 3)

4. With the nut removed, pull the raise/lower arm off the motor shaft. You may need to use something like "Liquid Wrench" and let it soak for a few minutes because the raise/lower arm sometimes rusts to the shaft. Note: This will be easier if you have somebody to help you hold the headlight up because it will not stay up by itself once this arm is pulled off the shaft :) You'll notice that the shaft is not perfectly round. It has two flat spots. You need to look at how these flat spots on the shaft are situated... one of the flat areas should be approx. facing the front of the car and the other towards the rear.



This next part is important! You now need to, while CLOSELY watching the motor shaft, rotate the raise/lower manual knob so the motor shaft turns exactly 180 degrees (or half a revolution). Once you have completed this, reattach the headlight raise lower arm. What you have just done is made it so the actual motor gear will now be in contact with the *other* half of the plastic gear. Sure, the teeth on the plastic gear are stripped, but they are stripped on the now unused side of the gear :)

Reattach the motor shaft nut and manually lower the headlight with the manual raise/lower knob... do NOT go too far! Stop lowering once the headlight gets about flush with the hood. It will automatically align itself properly once it has been electrically raised then lowered. Put everything back together and you should now have a quiet headlight!

All of Brent's other fix-it guides can be found at : <http://www.bfranker.badz28.com>

THANKS BRENT!!!