

Making a Sow's Ear into a Silk Purse

How to make your stock Aero seat into something great

by MrCourtney with information from Bama

I wasn't happy with my Corbin seat. It's too firm and the stock seat is well-known for its problems. This all started with a forum message from Bama:

"The problem with the Aero seat has nothing to do with the amount of padding, or even the type of foam used. The problem is in the shape and angle of the portion that gets occupied by the two bony parts of the rider's pelvis... called "sits bones". While the seat may appear to be angled downwards to the rear of the bike, it really isn't. It sits level. Due to the riding position with no way to lift yer ass off the seat, all the rider's torso weight is constantly being held up by the two sits bones. The body tends to try to shift forward a little, applying pressure to shove the cheek skin across the bones. This action results in numbness and eventually pain.

The cure is simple. Either eat a lot of Ibuprophen, get an assectomy, spend lots of money to replace the seat, or simply reshape the one you already paid for... for free. Here's how it's done:

Remove the seat and disassemble the passenger pad and associated bracket. Remove the staples carefully so as not to puncture the vinyl outer cover, starting at the rear of the seat and moving forward along both sides. You can remove the staples to a point three or four staples beyond where the stitched seams are that run to the edge of the material, leaving the nose material stapled to the seat pan.

Flip the seat rightside up and peel back the vinyl from rear to front, exposing the clear plastic moisture barrier. Fold it forward too, exposing the molded foam. The idea is to remove some foam from the sitting area so your butt gets cradled better into the seat. To do this, do NOT try using any type of carving knife or blades. Instead, get a sanding disc for your drill. A flap sanding disc on a side grinder works best. Carefully begin to remove foam from the bucket area evenly. Take your time because a sanding disc will have a tendency to eat foam FAST. Taper the new "well" you have created into the rounded sides of the seat's edge, but oleave those rounded edges intact. All you want to do is spoon out the butt area, then blend it back into the other stock areas of the seat. Smooth and gently taper the shape forward to blend it into the nose area.

By now you have fully realized you are deep inside a yellow mess of foam particles and dust that have gotten all over the planet, love static electricity and can only be eliminated through an act of god. That's okay. It's YOUR house, not mine again. Pull the plastic moisture barrier back into place, pull the vinyl back into place and stretch/tuck it back under the seat along the edges.

Flip the seat back over and stretch the vinyl back where it was originally, using the staple holes as guides. Align the original staple holes in the vinyl with the ones in the plastic seat pan and restaple. Use any ordinary T-50 staplegun like the ones from Bostitch or the cheapo Arrow models from Home Depot. Nothing fancy there. Just a common staple gun available at any hardware store. If you want, you can add some chrome studs (Tandy leather, Michaels Arts stores, Etc.) before stapling the material back into place.

Now the seat looks EXACTLY like it did stock. Get on your bike and ride it completely out of fuel, refill your tank and do this again and again. Your ass won't be screaming at you any more to stop. Problem solved. It takes about a half hour to 45 minutes tops, costs you nothing and is the single most beneficial modification you can ever do to improve your bike's comfort."

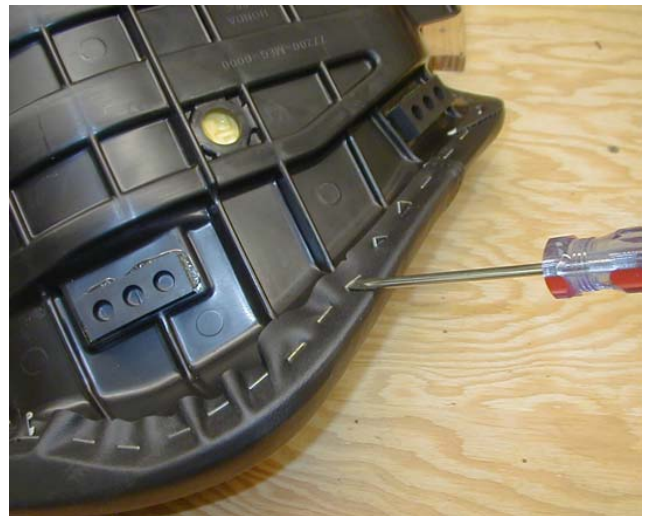
My original stock seat was hanging in the garage and I doubt I would ever use it again, so it's become the sacrificial lamb. Let's get to it...



This is what the bottom of your stock seat looks like after you've removed it from the bike. Note the pan is plastic and there's lots to staples holding the seat cover in place.

Starting from the back, remove the staples by carefully sliding a thin screwdriver under each one and lifting it enough so you can grab and remove it with pliers.

Do 3 or 4 then move to the other side doing another 3 or 4. You want to evenly move your way down the seat from back to front. Stop when you get about 5 staples from the front.



After the staples are removed, turn the seat over and GENTLY peel back the seat cover and plastic liner underneath it. Don't rip the plastic or you'll have a wet sponge for a seat the next time you're riding in the rain.

Peel it to about 3 or 4 inches from the end of the nose of the seat.





If you look at the bottom, this is about how far you should have it peeled back.

Bama recommends this for removing the foam. It didn't work well for me so I used this instead. It's great for removing paint and rust and it chewed out the foam in nothing flat.

This is where things really get messy. You're going to have small bits of foam all over the place.



Put your seat carefully back on the bike and sit on it. Take a marker and make some points where your butt space needs to be carved out. Draw a line where the bucket hole goes and make it a couple of inches inside an outer line. That outer line is where you'll taper the hole to.

Then take it off the bike and go somewhere that will be easy to clean the mess afterwards and start slowly carving out the foam to make a bucket for your butt.

Remember the seat when on the bike *is level* so make the bucket space deeper at the back end. Leave room between the bucket hole and the sides so you can taper it.





Every so often, put the seat back on the bike and sit on it. Adjustments will be necessary. Since you only have one shot at this - go slow.

Also press your finger into the foam in the deepest portion so you have a sense of how much foam is left. You have to leave enough to be comfortable. You want a good portion of your weight to be supported by the sections that are tapered so the bucket hole should be a bit smaller than you would think.

When you think you got it, clean off the foam dust, turn the seat over and carefully pull the seat cover and plastic back into position.



Starting from the nose, stretch the cover so the holes in the vinyl line up (approximately) with the holes in the pan where it was stapled. Don't forget to get the plastic with it.

Staple it using a regular staple gun. Trust me, electric is best. Do about 3 or 4 one side then 3 or 4 on the other side. You want to evenly work your way to the back of the seat.

If a staple doesn't go in all the way just use some pliers to push it down. Neatness is nice but nobody will be looking under there.



You're done. Total time for the seat mod about an hour.

Time to clean up the mess about 90 minutes.

Here it is - back on the bike and no one can tell it was reworked. It's a lot more comfortable than the Corbin I had on there before. (that's it in the background on the trash can).

Time will tell how comfortable this'll be for a long ride but it's great for an hour test ride I did.

Thanks Bama...

