

J2 TECHNICAL ARTICLE

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From Octagon Heaven

PROBLEM WITH SUPPLIER'S MECHANICAL BRAKE CABLES

Back in the years of 1979 and 1980 I was collecting new spares which I needed to have when restoring my car. At that time I purchased four new mechanical brake cables from Mike Dowley of Sports and Vintage Motors Limited. Mr. Dowley is a fine man and it is good to do business with him for the problem that I ran into in 1986 he took care of for me and was most helpful in the matter. I am passing this on to you so you might be aware of the problems with the manufacturer of the brake cables.

First of all the adjustment threads on the cables are normal threads and not B.S.F. This makes the fine adjustments needed in setting the brakes that much harder to get.

Secondly the Tee blocks which are mounted to the chassis and to the brake drum mounting bracket are also normal course threads. This the requires you to remove the mounting bracket off of the brake drum and drill out the B.S.F. threaded hole to put in the larger diameter stud.

The third problem was that the adjuster is mounted tightly to the sheilded cable and so movement of the adjuster is difficult. It is almost impossible to move it against the spiral direction of the flex sheilded cable.

Those were the three minor problems and Mike could not get those changed without adding considerable expense to the cost of the brake cables.

My major problem was that upon getting everything ready to hook up and adjust my brakes, I found that the brake cables were about 1" too short! After checking everthing many times I concluded that it had to be the cable for no other part could have been mounted improperly or in the wrong place.

Well it is not easy to take brake cables off and on, they are a bear to get off and onto the brake cross shaft!

I wrote Mr. Dowley and he was nice enough to supply me with the length of the inner and outer cables. I check my old cables (I do not throw any old parts away -thank God!) My old cables checked out with his dimensions! I took off the new cables and checked them only to find out that they were correct to length also. So then why if the old ones fit and the new ones were an inch too short, would not the new ones fit?

I scratched my head about that for days. Finally I went out and laid

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the old and new cables side by side. I checked the position of the plate where the cable is bolted to the chassis and that checked out the same on both old and new. Then I finally saw the difference!

There were two things different about the new cables:

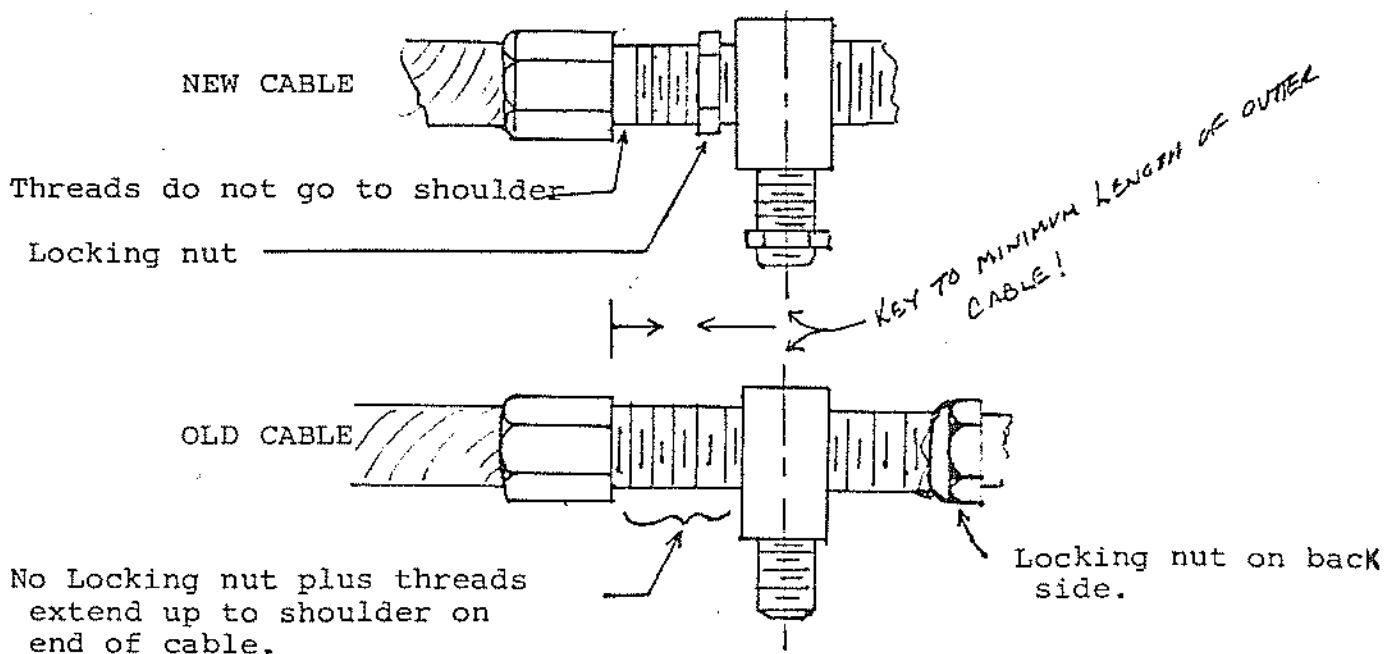
1. The new cables had a lock nut between the Tee block and the adjuster at the outer cable. That lock nut took up about 1/4" of space. A lock nut on each end accounted for 1/2 inch.
2. I also noticed that the manufacturer did not thread the adjuster all the way to the adjuster nut and so the lock nut could not get as close -- about another 1/4" of adjustment lost. Lost on both ends is another 1/2"

Now Mr Dowley has goes back to the manufacturer and they have removed the lock nut and he had the manufacturer bring the threads up closer to the adjuster nut -- although I understand the manufacturer claims that the assembly then is weaker.

The nice part of the whole thing is that Mr. Dowley offered to have the manufacturer make me a set of cables to my specs!

If you have old outer cables (sheilded flex cables) and needed new inner cables, I am sure that Mike would have the manufacturer do that for you.

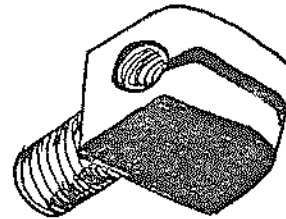
I have learned that nothing is impossible when you are working with a fine supplier.



There is another fix for those who are converting back to mechanical brakes or who are willing to modify parts on their cars from what was original. The fix is to relocate the tee block hole on the plate on the brake drum. If I had been willing to have moved the hole one inch closer to the brake lever, I could have used the new parts as was.

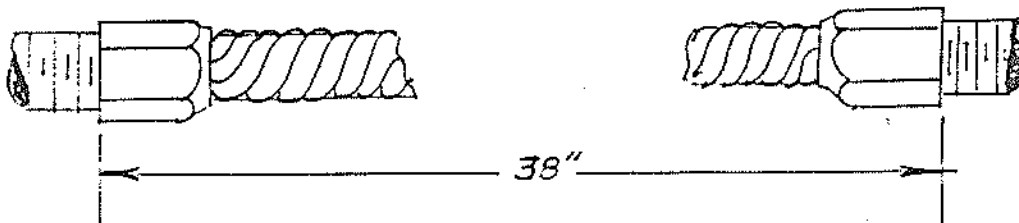
But there was one other reason why I decided to rework my old parts and use them and that reason is the manufacturer did not cut the slot in the new tee blocks thus, any time you wish to take the brake cables off of the car, you have to pull all four wheels, take the brake system apart, loosen the mounting bracket which the Tee block is mounted to so you can remove the tee block with the brake cables. The purpose of the slot is to allow you to remove the cable from it without having to remove the tee block!

So, you have to decide that to do,
For me I will use the old parts
and rework them as long as I
can for the replacement parts
will work but not near as well!



Rear Cables

Outer Cable - Overall length but not including screwed ends 38"
Inner Cable - From ball to centre line of front clevis pin hole
in fork 53"



Front Cables

Outer Cable - Overall length but not including screwed ends 43 1/4"
Inner Cable - From ball to centre line of front clevis pin hole
in fork 56"