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## **From Six to Eight**

*Walton Fabrication makes it easy to install a V-8 and contemporary transmission in your '49-54 Chevy*

There are several reasons that '49-54 Chevys were always seen more as custom bait than hot rod material. One of those is the fact that they all came with straight-six power. Oh sure, the sixes could be made to run strong with speed parts (particularly if you swapped in a big inline GMC), but it wasn't the same as having a Rocket Olds, a hopped-up flathead, or (in later years) a small-block Chevy under the hood.

These days, '49-54 Chevys are still good candidates for custom projects because they're relatively plentiful, fairly affordable, and darn nice lookin' to boot. But the desire for V-8 power remains, especially in this era of cross-country journeys and 75-mph speed limits. Fortunately, swapping in a Chevy V-8 and modern transmission is easier than ever thanks to aftermarket parts like the new engine mounts and transmission crossmembers made by Walton Fabrication.

We recently cruised up to Walton's facility in Upland, California, to watch the installation of these new parts in a '54 Chevy. The Walton engine mounts require weld-in installation, but have a convenient design feature in the form of locating holes that align with holes on the Chevy frame to ensure proper placement. The mounts will work with stock suspensions as well as many aftermarket IFS kits. The transmission crossmember bolts in using existing holes, but is also welded at a couple of mounting points. It features a bolt-in transmission mount plate (for easy tranny removal) that can be adjusted to accept nearly any GM transmission from a Powerglide to an electronic overdrive. Of course, installing a newer transmission means you'll be converting to an open driveline, so you'll also need a new driveshaft and different rearend to complete your V-8 and transmission swap.

Now more than ever it's easy to have a V-8 in your Chevy. Check out the photos and see for yourself.



Now you can have a V-8 in your '49-54 Chevy without the headache of fabricating your own brackets.

Walton Fabrication offers engine mounts and a transmission crossmember that are easy to install and fit like factory components.



The engine mounts are simple, sturdy and well constructed. They'll work for both small-block and big-block Chevy engines (although big-blocks may require relocation of the radiator). The holes in the lower flange help align the mounts on the frame.



The factory engine mount brackets are riveted to the frame, and should be removed prior to installation.



The Walton engine mounts can then be clamped to the frame. Bolts are inserted through the alignment holes to properly locate the brackets. The bracket shown is on the passenger side--the driver's side is a mirror image.



Once the sheetmetal was off, the engine and transmission could be removed, followed by the front suspension and crossmember, motor mounts, steering column and box, brake lines, and miscellaneous brackets.



Though the brackets are located using bolts, they need to be welded to the frame. Start with tack welds so you can double-check the fit of the engine before finishing the welds. (And yes, we know that Todd should be wearing welding gloves here.)



Moving under the car, here's a look at the original transmission crossmember. As you can see, it attaches to the frameraills as well as two braces that angle back from the front of the frame.



The Walton Fabrication crew has found from experience that some '49-54 Chevy transmission crossmembers were riveted in place, while others were bolted. Regardless, all the fasteners will have to come out before the old piece is removed. Even then it might take some coaxing with a hammer.



Here's a look at the original crossmember compared to the Walton piece. Notice the drop-out transmission mount on the Walton part.



The new crossmember slides into place much like the original. Mounting flanges on the ends bolt to the frameraills using the mounting holes from the original crossmember.



The crossmember bolts to the top side of the two center braces and is welded to the ears on the bottom of each brace. The ears may have to be bent slightly to fit snugly against the crossmember.



Once installed, the new crossmember looks clean and provides plenty of function and space.



We let Tom Blair strong-arm the engine and transmission into place (it's a plastic block with an empty TH350 case attached, so he didn't have to strain too much!). The only necessary modifications were the removal of the factory hand brake linkage.



As you can see, the engine fits like it was born in the car. The only interference problems are with the vertical flanges on the firewall, which have to be trimmed slightly or removed entirely.





The transmission fits just as well. The drop-out mount allows for easy tranny removal and can be oriented in several configurations to accept a variety of transmissions.