

2002-2003 Subaru WRX

Replace "Factory Optional" Lamco Column-Mounted Boost Gauge with 45mm Omori Mechanical Boost Gauge by CirrusWRX

I wish I could ask the Subaru person who said, "Yeah—That Lamco gauge looks great! It's small, hard to read, has a non-matching needle and back light, and comes in a measurement nobody uses!!!" Because if I did, I'd smack him. Anyway, this job is pretty simple – swap the column mounted boost gauge, and replace it with a better looking, easier to read, more accurate (IMO), and more common unit of measurement (PSI).

Tools needed for the job:

- Omori 45mm Boost Gauge (Highly recommend color-matching yellow needle)
- Flat head screwdriver
- Pipe wrench
- Dikes (wire cutters, not the Tatu kind you fool!)
- Rubber "lid opener"
- WD-40, spit, or some other form of rubber lubricant (don't even go there...)
- Wire strippers (not necessary, but makes it so easy)
- Crimpers (again, not necessary, but if you choose to use butt splices)
- Butt splices (x2)

Here are some of my tools



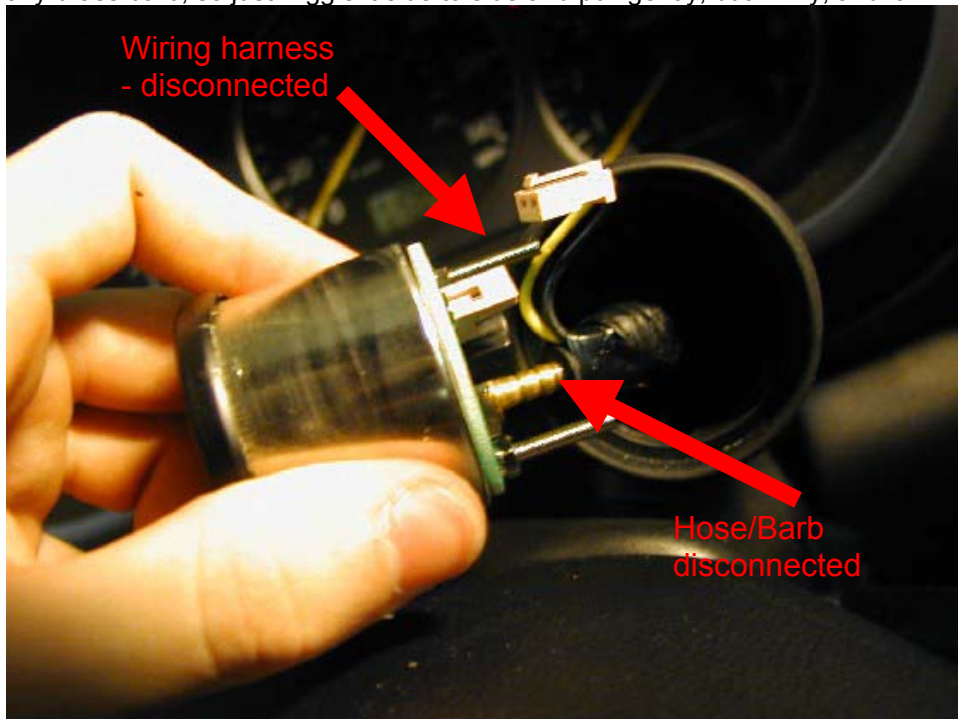
1. First we need to remove the old gauge from the rubber housing. Here's a word about the rubber housing – first, it's rubber, so bear that in mind, as it can be rather easy to tear with sharp objects, so be careful with those. But the advantage is that you can be rather rough with it without worrying if it'll break. It's actually quite a bit stronger than I had realized. The first thing I recommend doing is lowering your steering wheel to the lowest tilt setting. The bar is to the left of the wheel, just pull it down and then pull the wheel down as far as it will go – it should give you another 2" to work with.
2. Then you can start to move the rubber around to soften it up a bit, and get it unstuck from the old gauge. To assist in this, I used the flat screwdriver to VERY CAREFULLY pry around the edges, as there is a little lip that sort of "suctions" itself to the gauge. If you want to save your old gauge (like, maybe sell it or something...) be careful using any tools on/around the gauge, because you may scratch or dent it. I'm not going to do anything with mine, so I didn't really care. With that said, mine looks brand new, but I just want to warn you in case you think it's indestructible.



3. Once you begin to slide the gauge out, with a combination of pushing from the back, wiggling, nudging, etc... you can get just enough out where you can use a pipe wrench, with the rubber lid opener for protection to SLOWLY pull it forward, out of the cup. I was NOT careful, and just used the wrench on the gauge itself, but again, you COULD VERY EASILY DAMAGE YOUR GAUGE IF YOU DO THIS WITHOUT USING SOMETHING TO PROTECT THE GAUGE!!! Also, make sure your wrench has its "teeth" around the front lip of the gauge, otherwise, you'll just snap off of it and scratch it, or dent it. It's held in there quite tightly, so as you pull the gauge forward, hold the rubber cup with your hand and help it out by "massaging" the rubber to work the gauge out of the housing.



4. Once the gauge has enough room for you to grab it with your fingers, you can just pull it out by hand. You will see the little plug for power and ground, and the rubber hose that goes to the engine compartment. Simply unplug the harness, and wiggle the hose out. You can see the plug is disconnected in the pic, and the hose is simple pushed onto a tiny brass barb, so just wiggle it side to side and pull gently, but firmly, and it will slide off.



5. Now go open up your Omori gauge, and unscrew the little clamp since we don't need it. You will note there are the identical two wires (though instead of yellow/black, it's white/black) and the little barb for the hose.



6. Now all we have to do is splice the wires. Now some people will scoff at my butt splices, and others will not want to cut the harness of the old gauge because they want to sell it. Well, I wanted to do this quickly and easily, and so I did what I was comfortable with. If you want to take the dash apart and unplug the harness, and solder new connections and run them to the battery, be my guest. But since you're reading this, you probably should go with the simple route. With that said, I choose to do the following.
 - 6a. I cut the wires on the Omori gauge so there were about 2" left – the way they come from the box, there is SO much on there, it will just get in the way.
 - 6b. I cut the wires from the old gauge about 2" away from the harness plug. That way, if somebody EVER wanted to use the gauge again, all they would have to do is splice two wires, and they'd be set. Kinda the best of both worlds.
 - 6c. Once you have 4 cut wires, simply strip the ends (I used my handy-dandy wire stripper) and splice and crimp: BLACK to BLACK and **YELLOW** to **WHITE** as you will see in the next pic



7. Once you have that done, tuck the wires back in, to make more room to plug the hose back on to the barb. You will have to fit a little bit to get it to fit, and there will be much wiggling, turning, poking, and cursing to get the barb back in, as there was not much slack on mine. Once you have the hose on, the wires spliced, all that's left to do is push it into the cup!! (Yeah... like it's that easy...) ****DISCLAIMER, DON'T ACTUALLY DO IT YET!!!****

Very important – Take some WD-40, or something that can make rubber slippery (no sex lube jokes please!!!) coat the inside ring of the pod with your finger, and the outside portion of the gauge. It will make your job MUCH easier. If you don't have anything, use your spit – that should help even a bit!

8. To work the gauge back into the cup, it is hell, and clearly the most difficult part of this procedure. What I recommend doing is trying to “bend” it in sideways to get it seated around the ring. Since the old gauge was 42mm, and the Omori is 45, it's a tight fit, but very doable. I also used a very tiny flat-head screwdriver wrapped in a napkin to help pull the inner “ring” of the cup to the side to help it fit. After much hemming and hawing, and cursing and pushing and prodding, the gauge will look like the following – about 60% of the way in. **DON'T PUSH ANY FURTHER – READ THE NEXT STEP**



9. It is VERY critical that at the very instant you get the gauge seated inside the cup, that you line it up properly. I used the "x1000/RPM" and "Impreza" logo on the tach and the "Turbo" word on the gauge, and just eyed it up, as I sat in the normal driving position. You need to make it PERFECT here because the further you push it in, it basically becomes impossible to adjust it. Damn I'm good. If it's "close" and not perfect, it will probably bother the heck out of you, so make sure it's PERFECT – If you start to push it in, and it slides off, pull it back a bit, readjust it and do it again. As I said, this is EASILY the most difficult part of the whole process.



10. Well, just push it in until it can go no further! I let mine stick out a few MM, because I was happy with where it sat. One could probably push it in further, but in the event I had to pull it out again (ie. My wires were backwards, or something stupid...) So this is where I got mine to sit, and it was even all the way around.



11. After congratulating yourself, do the ever-so-important process of cleaning up your stuff. And as this will inevitably happen to at least one person, they will become ever so frightened that their parking lights and brake lights won't go off. So please, hit the switch on the top of the steering column to turn them off ☺

Mmmm... don't you just love the look of the white letters, and yellow needle!!! Now why didn't Subaru offer THIS gauge so we didn't have to do this in the first place?!?!



12. Finally, go for a test drive! I did this at night, so I also got to make sure my gauge lighting was working properly. And since it's a mechanical gauge, it dims with the rest of the gauges! My impressions of this gauge were very positive. It's MUCH easier to read, and I only can give you my impression AT NIGHT! I can't imagine how much easier it will be to see during the day. It is also nice to read in PSI now, instead of Mpa – while I memorized roughly what each one was, I didn't feel I was exact with those little numbers, as I am now with the new Omori. I topped out around 13.5-14PSI on a medium-cool night, and virtually NO engine mods that would affect boost. The gauge reacts a LITTLE bit slower, but the "sweep" just looks much "tighter" than the Lamco which seemed to bounce around on my car. The green at night is close, but I will admit that it's not 100% perfect match to the factory gauges, but while my pictures make it appear like they are TOTALLY different, they're not – the camera just over-exaggerates the colors.

Either way, I love it, and this gauge FINALLY completes my gauge setup! Thanks go out to Thaison at <http://www.j-spectuning.com> for the boost gauge – great service, good price, and Kastle @ <http://www.kastleskornor.com> for hosting this writeup on Scoobymods.com and for the other 3 Omori gauges in my gauge pod– thanks guys!! Any questions, feel free to email me at CirrusWRX@artechnik.com

