

Inexpensive Cup Holder

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1976 Jaguar XJ-S

Background

An often-voiced complaint about the XJ-S is the lack of a cup holder. Several aftermarket solutions have emerged, as outlined in Kirby Palm's Book <http://www.jag-lovers.org/xj-s/book>. Described here is a very inexpensive, inelegant alternative.

Materials

Go to an auto parts store and look in the area where they have little driver conveniences, such as air fresheners, trash baskets, etc. There you will probably find a plastic cup holder designed with a flap to slip between the glass and the windowsill. This is the starting point for the project. I've also seen these at car washes. The cost less than \$4, and come in two or three colors.

You will also need a small amount, perhaps one square foot, of cloth backed vinyl upholstery material to match, or at least not clash with, your interior. Of course, a scrap of matching leather would do even better!

Finally, you will need some upholstery adhesive, such as 3M 08088 or 08090, and some 5/32" x 1/4" (or similar) aluminum pop rivets *with backing washers*.

Putting It Together (Note: See an alternative construction below)

Although you could use it as designed, you will probably find it not convenient hanging on the windowsill. Here's what you have to do to let it hang on the side of the center console, Figure 1.



Figure 1 Cup holder installed

First, remove and toss the plastic flap. It slips easily out of the slot. Use a utility knife to cut off the slot and smooth the cut edges with sandpaper or file.

Then cut a strip of upholstery material the width of the back of the cup holder and about twice its length. Following directions for the adhesive, glue it, fabric side down, to the back of the cup holder.

Unfortunately, the adhesive joint will not be strong enough, so you will have to reinforce it as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3.



Figure 2 Front



Figure 3 Back

Cut another strip of material about an inch wide and long enough to wrap around the cup holder at the top. Apply adhesive and wrap it around. Then, use an awl, or a small “arch punch” (perhaps from <http://www.mcmaster.com/>), to punch three holes all the way through. Put pop rivets in the holes, Figure 2, using washers on the backside to provide a hard surface for the rivets to grip.

The exposed pop rivet heads on the front side are harmless, but you don’t want to leave the rough back side of the rivets to scratch the leather on the console. To prevent this, cut another strip of material and glue it over the rivets, Figure 3.

Installation

To use the holder simply pop out the ashtray, lay the flap over the hole, and reinsert it. If there is no passenger I prefer it on the passenger side. However, I find I can also hang it on the driver’s side when needed. One day, perhaps I’ll make up another one for my wife!

Limitations

These holders will work fine for a Starbucks tall latte, a small water bottle, or soda can. However, I’d think twice before using it to hold a Big Gulp.

Revised Construction

I later discovered an easier, and better, way to build it. Instead of cutting the slot off the cupholder, use it to hold the upholstery material. Cut a coat hanger just long enough to fit into the slot. Fold one end of the material and stitch it as shown in Figure 4. Feed the other end through the slot, and you’re finished.



Figure 4. Alternative construction.