

> EZ Does It: Installing Factory Stripes



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# EASY ACCENTS

INSTALLING FACTORY STRIPES ON OUR DART SPORT

TEXT AND PHOTOS: RANDY BOLIG

**O**ne of the many things that Mopar vehicles are known for is the use of accents. Be it hoodpins or emblems, to the sometimes over-the-top use of decals and even stripes, accents were, and still are, a big part of Mopar's eye-catching appeal.

Quite some time ago, when we finished our Dart Sport project, we told you we would show you how easy it was to install the stripes. Well, this led to that, and we regrettably forgot to print the tech article about it. Luckily, we're hands-on when it comes to working on our cars, so even though it's been a while since we did the install, we actually remember how easy it

was, so we can write the article.

Installing this or any stripe is only as easy as you make it. If you take your time, think the process through before you begin, and use the right tools, you should have no problem. When we ordered our stripe kit from Phoenix Graphix, we were informed about a new application lubricant that would help our install. Their Slide-On application gel can't guarantee the perfect application of a stripe, but it will provide you with enough time to help you get it as correct as possible. The contents of the gel resists drying until you are ready to squeegee it out from underneath the vinyl surface, allowing you to position and reposition the stripe for the proper fit. Only after squeegee'd out from under the

stripe does the graphic "set up."

The stripe on our Dart Sport can possibly be considered one of the harder "one piece" (actually, it comes in several sections, but when installed on the car it is one continuous stripe) stripes to install, but we were confident we could handle it. Our stripe runs the length of the car, up over the roof, and then back to the front of the car. Avoiding any wrinkles or fold-ups is not that hard to do if you take your time.

The install took a good half day to complete, but the results were exactly what we wanted—the stripe fit the body lines of the car, and the application gel really came in handy. Now our Sport has the look that Mopar designed, and it's a fresh new stripe which looks great.



**1** ◀ Without the factory stripe installed, the side of our Dart Sport looks like a big empty canvas. Lucky for us, Mopar thought the same thing in 1975 and covered the "canvas" with a stripe.



**2** ▶ Although the stripe is one continuous stripe around the car, the kit from Phoenix Graphics is divided into sections (just like the originals) to ease installation.



**3** ◀ We began our install by placing the door stripes in place first. The door stripes have more obstacles like latches and sometimes locks that need to be avoided, so starting here ensures that your stripe doesn't interfere with them later.





**4** ▶ Before removing any of the stripe's backer paper, installing the stripe and holding it in place with masking tape helps keep things aligned later.



**5** ◀ Just as a side note, it helps to have another set of hands for the install of this or any stripe.



**6** ▶ Once you have the stripe completely positioned on the car, carefully cut the masking tape at the edge of the stripe's protective covering and remove the stripe from the car. The reason for the masking tape now becomes apparent. When you actually reinstall the stripe permanently, you can use the masking tape as a guide.







**7** Applying the new Slide-On Application Gel from Phoenix Graphix definitely made the job easier. Using your hand, apply a liberal amount of the gel to the area where the stripe will be attached. This gel allows you to move and position the stripe to the exact spot you want it.



**8** With the gel applied, position the stripe where you want it, and slowly and carefully start remove the air and excess gel from under the stripe with a squeegee. Remember, once the gel is removed from under the stripe, it ain't moving, so be careful.



**9** Continuing back from the door, what is probably the most difficult stripe to align is the quarter-panel to roof stripe. This stripe needs to follow the body line and transition onto the roof with getting any wrinkles in it. Again, the gel makes it easy, as it allows movement of the stripe until it is finally positioned.



**10** ▶ With the driver side installed, we smear the gel on the passenger side to start that stripe. Notice that the roof stripe is still only temporarily installed, as it's used as a guide for the passenger side. Once the passenger side is installed, the roof stripe can be positioned joining the two quarter to roof stripes and affixed.



**11** ▼ Once you have the stripe completely installed, it's time to see how you did. You need to carefully remove the protective tape covering that is applied over the stripe by Phoenix Graphix. To do this, carefully pull the "tape" (protective covering) off of the stripe. Do not pull the tape off by pulling directly away from the car. You will remove the stripe and ruin it. Pull the tape directly along the body of the car.



**12** Once you have the protective covering removed, you may find some small bubbles under the stripe. These can be removed by poking them with a small pin to allow the air to escape. We also found that the many very small bubbles disappeared by simply parking the car in the sun.



**13** ◀ With the stripe installed, the Sport has a factory appearing stripe that enhances the car. Once again, Mopar did it right when they designed the stripe. *MM*

### SOURCE

PHOENIX GRAPHIX  
CHANDLER, AZ 85226  
800.941.4560  
[www.phoenixgraphix.com](http://www.phoenixgraphix.com)