



This is a convertible. You really can't tell, because it features the Daytona R Removable Hardtop from Smooth Line. We'll show how easy it was to install this top.

# Hard Top, Easy Install

CONVERTIBLES CAN BE YEAR ROUND WITH THE SMOOTH LINE REMOVABLE UNIT

text by Larry Jewett / photography provided by Smooth Line

**It's getting down to that time. If you live in an environment that isn't convertible-friendly 12 months a year, you've faced the prospect of putting away your car for the winter. Hibernation is becoming a fact of life, but in the process, you take away some of the enjoyment of having such a unique car.**

For those who own convertibles built for 1994 through 2004 model years, a new option exists. Smooth Line High Performance Composites has developed a removable hardtop for your Mustangs. The top is a simple installation that adds more hours of enjoyment for your car. It's called the Daytona R model, utilizing the '05-up coupe roof line with two triangular-shaped side quarter-windows and a convertible-sized rear window. It offers a very sleek look because weather doesn't have to be the only consideration for a hardtop. The styling of the Smooth Line unit makes the top a choice for simple road appeal, one way to make your car stand out from the crowd.

For the do-it-yourselfer, this project is going to be a snap. For someone looking to develop confidence in their aptitude,

you've come to the right place. Simply follow the instructions and this effort will guarantee desired results.

Attaching a Smooth Line removable hardtop does not require any modifications to the existing car. If you have installed a light bar, don't worry. You'll find the bar fits very nicely beneath the new top. No tools are required.

Remember that automobiles are mass-produced and built with certain tolerances. Sometimes the tolerances can be quite large. If you find your vehicle pushing certain tolerances to the limit, you may want to consult a skilled body man for assistance.

In order to find the fitment, the best way is to do a simple test installation. We'll take you through the steps to get that accomplished and guide you to the

final touches that will put you on the way to showing off the new look.

### Getting Started

To start the procedure, you need to lower all windows. The windows will remain lowered while the installation process is underway. Once the windows are down, the convertible top goes into the normal down position.

To ensure the best fit, it's time to do a little cleaning that may have been neglected over time. Clean the top of the windshield frame and the rear deck area. This is a good time to check the windshield rubber for excessive wear or damage.

Once that has been completed, it is time to turn some attention to the Daytona R Hardtop. With a silicone lubricant or Vaseline, lubricate the bottom of the deck rubber on the top. You will need to keep the primed surface area that will be painted free of the lubricant, so use caution to avoid contact.

Take a good look at the latching assemblies on the front and rear of the hardtop. The two front latches will hook to the windshield much like the convertible

top. The rear fasteners will hook to the convertible mechanism itself. You will find the location point to be near the convertible pivot point. The hardtop is secured by turning the black plastic knobs clockwise until snug.

## Placement

As you place the top on the car, you will use the front locator pins. These will fit into the sockets on the windshield frame. Open the latches on the hardtop and place it on the car, using the locator pins as front guides. Once you are certain that the top has been properly positioned, paying attention to the front and rear as well as centering the top on the car, go ahead and close the front latches around the latch assemblies.

To attach the back of the top, you'll need to start by loosening the black knob on the "J" hook. Try to loosen it as much as possible without removing it from the hardtop pad. The end of the "J" hook will latch onto the convertible frame with the toe of the "J" hook facing the front of the car. Once this has been done on both sides, you can turn the knobs clockwise to secure the rear. Don't tighten them yet.

Push down and forward on the rear of the top while continuing to tighten the knobs. Do not attempt to over-tighten them. Also, note there must be a gap between the car body and the hardtop to avoid paint abrasion and to relieve pressure when the doors are closed.

Now, it's time to see how you did. Close each door window and gently close each door. This will allow you to check for any interference between the top, windows, and doors.

## Not Straight?

The Daytona R has adjustments that will permit you to move the top forward or backward or even side-to-side. To make the adjustments, open the front latches and loosen the rear latches. You will find locator pins under the upholstery. With a Torx T27 screwdriver, push through the upholstery to loosen the screws. Do not remove the screws. Push the hardtop into the desired position. When you are satisfied with the fit, retighten all of the attachment screws. You can then re-latch the front and re-tighten the rear latches.

## Trim Moldings

Part of the appearance of the hardtop is the look you will get with the supplied trim molding and rubber seals. For the moldings, you'll need to clean the surface

of the hardtop with alcohol. Remove a short section of the tape's protective film and press firmly for adhesion. Careful use of a heat gun at the corners will make easier installation. Check the openings and adjust the moldings. The adhesive doesn't bond for 48 hours. When you are satisfied with the fit, you can activate the adhesion process by using the heat gun while pressing down on the molding.

For the rubber seals, the surface must be cleaned with alcohol. Do not stretch the rubber while compressing it from end to end.

## Trail Edge Molding

Before any type of painting can be done, the trail edge molding should be installed. Molding preparation includes cleaning the surface of the hardtop with alcohol and removing a small portion of the tape's protective film. Starting at the doorjamb, align the edge of the molding with the quarter-panel for an even gap of  $\frac{1}{8}$ - to  $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch. Move rearward and press firmly for adhesion. Check the opening at the rear deck and adjust the molding as needed. Repeat the process for the other side of the car and use the molding adhesion process by pressing down while using the heat gun.

## Prior to Painting

If the top is equipped with a plexiglass rear window, mask off the window with cellophane or a non-porous material. This will prevent fumes from attacking the window. Use normal body shop procedures for prepping and sanding the surface. The factory prime coat is urethane, which is compatible with all top coats. No sealer is needed.

The factory primed surface must be topcoated before exposure to weather. Blisters and delamination could result, which also voids the warranty.

## Now Paint

To achieve the retro curved window look, Smooth Line recommends masking and painting the window jamb from the outer seam inward in a flat black color. The seam will be covered with the side window trim molding after the color coat. Don't leave the factory finish primed.

Roof drip molding is applied after painting. Cut and trim ends to fit and paint it the same color as the top.

## After Painting

Install the rear window trim rubber by



**1** The front locator sockets play a key role in the correct placement. These sockets will engage the new top and assist in proper alignment.

**2** The front latch attachment is located near the visor. This is the point where the convertible top is secured in the upright position. It will serve the same purpose for the removable hardtop.

**3** Attachment at the rear has never been an issue, but it will be now. Make sure the "J" hooks are facing the proper direction and are secured to the attachment point on the convertible top frame.

**4** The roof drip molding will match the color of the top. It is installed after painting to avoid bridging. From the top, you can see how good this comes together.

**5** The optional side scoop really gives the car a sporty look and feel. Installation of the side scoop is a snap with the provided hardware. Other options include plush interiors in complimentary colors, sunroof, and tinted safety glass rear windows.



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starting in the center and compressing the rubber while installing. Glue the corners and ends with super glue. Do the same to install the leading edge rubber.

For side window trim molding, start at the front corner. Align the molding and the hardtop while moving rearward and downward. Use a heat gun on the radius. Next, install the "A" post molding, aligning the top end of it with the hardtop's window molding. You can tuck the bottom end behind the fender. The use of the heat gun and some firm pressure will get the permanent adhesion.

Quarter-windows are simply installed by using the supplied washers and Nylok nuts. The side window can be installed

after a surface cleaning. Remove the red tape backing from the adhesive, starting on the front of the weather seal. Position the front portion of the side window seal tight against the windshield weather seal pocket and against the door glass for a perfect fit. With the door window in the "up" position, gently close the door and check for any interference between the hardtop, door or window.

A crisp dollar bill can be used to check for proper window seal. Open the door with the window in the "up" position. Place the bill between the window and the seal and close the door. The bill should drag, but not rip while pulling it out.

Proceed rearward, then downward in the installation, compressing but not stretching the rubber. After a water test and a road test for wind noise, you can again use the heat gun to begin the adhesion process.

## Tracking

Initially, when raising the windows, you may see them following the wrong track in the rubber. This will happen until the rubber seal takes a permanent set from the window. Make sure the rubber is properly lubricated with a silicone-based wax or Vaseline.

To avoid this problem, press outwardly on the window while it is going up. Always keep the windows in the "up" position when the car is not in use until the adhesion process is completed.

## Maintenance

To achieve the best results from the

Smooth Line Hardtop, periodic checks are required. These checks include the tightness of the latches and application of lubrication in areas that produce squeaks. For the plexiglass rear and side windows, caution should be used to avoid scratching. Clean the windows with water and mild soap using a sponge or soft cloth, and dry them with a chamois. Never wipe them while they are dry or you will scratch the plexiglass.

## Options

Some may choose to forgo the side windows in favor of a side scoop. This is an optional offering and as simple to install as the windows themselves. Simply bolt them in place in the openings with the provided hardware.

Other options include interior upholstery, sunroof, and hardtop carriers.

## Looking Good

In a short period, this car was transformed from fair-weather vehicle to year round use. Thanks to the development of the Daytona R Hardtop for '94-'04 Mustang convertibles, owners now have a choice and you'll start to see more convertibles on the road year round. ■

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