

Bed-Lift Handle Modification

Several months ago I added a bed-lift handle to our Phaeton's bed. I had found that opening the bed was always a two hand operation, after a little thought, planning and materials gathering I was ready to build and install my bed-lift handle.

The first modification made to make lifting the bed easier and more evenly balanced when lifted was to replace the 100 lb. 20 inch air spring on the left side of the bed with a 120 lb. 20 inch air spring, the replacement air spring was purchased from Camping World. Tiffin mounts the bed plywood offset to the left of the bed box, in doing so Tiffin made the left side of the bed heavier then the right side, creating a un-balanced lift. Installing the 20 lb. heavier (stronger) air spring on the left side of the bed returns the balance when the bed is lifted.

My next step was to design the bed-lift handle. I wanted to make the handle heavy duty enough to last forever I also wanted to make the bed-lift a one hand operation.

I decided to use a piece of 3/4 plywood for the handle. Below is a picture of the bottom of the finished and installed handle.



I cut the plywood 13 inches wide and 7 inches tall. The handle opening was cut 10 inches wide by 1 3/4 inches tall. After cutting the opening that left the plywood handle grip portion 1 1/4 inches. By making the opening that wide I figured anyone even if they needed to use both hands to lift with would still be able to get both hands inside of the handle opening.

The 7 inch portion of the handle was divided into a 3 inch and a 4 inch section, the 3 inch section extends past the end of the bed plywood (the 1 3/4 inch and 1 1/4 inch portions make the 3 inches) while the 4 inch portion is placed under the bed plywood. I centered the handle on the width of the bed side to side, clamped the handle to the bed plywood with a couple of bar clamps to hold everything in place while I drilled 3 - 3/8 inch holes through the bed plywood one hole was centered and the other two holes were drilled about 2 inches from the outside edge of the handle. I had previously purchased three - 3/8 inch carriage bolts 2 inches in length. I also used 6 - 1/2 inch flat washers to keep the carriage bolts from being pulled through either piece of the plywood. 3/8 inch Nylock nuts were added to finish the project.

Below is a picture of the top of the bed-lift after the installation was complete.



Using the above bed-lift handle dimensions enabled me to provide a 1 inch clearance between the bed-lift plywood handle and the carpeted bed-box after the bed has been lowered.

Build and install this bed-lift and enjoy the ease in opening the bed storage.