

Freeing a Stuck Clutch Disc vru/181103

Note that this procedure is fairly vehicle specific, but the general approach may be of use to vehicles that do not have any external access to the edge of the flywheel and pressure plate. Physically sliding a sliver, such as a putty knife, in between the stuck clutch disc and pressure plate is a simple approach if it can be done.

A stuck clutch has happened several times to my 1950 Dodge B2 ½ ton pickup. Due to moisture, clutch age, and sitting idle for extended periods of time, the clutch will glue itself to the pressure plate. Sometimes, it will break loose under load: try locking the emergency break and hit the starter with the ignition off, in gear and clutch depressed. I have also tried starting the truck in gear with the ignition on (in reverse and 1'st) with the clutch pedal depressed – just be careful you don't hit something when the vehicle starts lurching. If this doesn't work, then physical intervention is necessary. Fortunately, this vehicle has a removable clutch housing cover plate beneath the flywheel.

1. Safely support the front end and chock the rear wheels. Leave the ignition off, emergency brake off and the transmission in neutral.



2. Disconnect the emergency brake cable at the brake lever past the transmission housing.



3. Remove the retaining clip on the emergency brake cable housing on the bracket at the clutch housing cover. Pull the emergency brake cable housing back and out of the bracket.



4. Compress the clutch pedal completely.



5. Remove the five ½" clutch cover retaining bolts and remove the cover.



6. Gently tap a clean putty knife blade into the pressure disk housing, inserting the blade between the clutch disc and the flywheel. Repeat around the pressure disk housing. Note that it shouldn't take much effort – light tapping, if the blade is lined up properly. Once the clutch becomes unstuck, the blade will insert easily by hand.



7. In neutral, with the ignition off, crank the engine for a few seconds to rotate the flywheel. Repeat inserting the putty knife around the clutch disc until it is completely free. Put everything back together. Here are the tools used.



8. The first time I had to do this, it was a filthy job. I thoroughly cleaned the clutch housing, and cut out the oil-soaked and swollen fiber gasket on the clutch housing that was preventing the clutch housing from pulling back and dropping the first time. A final note – it seems to help, once the clutch is free, to warm it up and dry it out by deliberately slipping the clutch to heat it up and dry it out. Caution, though – only slip the clutch for a minute or so (not too much or you'll glaze the clutch). It also helps to drive the vehicle more frequently. Oh, and it's good to have a helper, too!

