

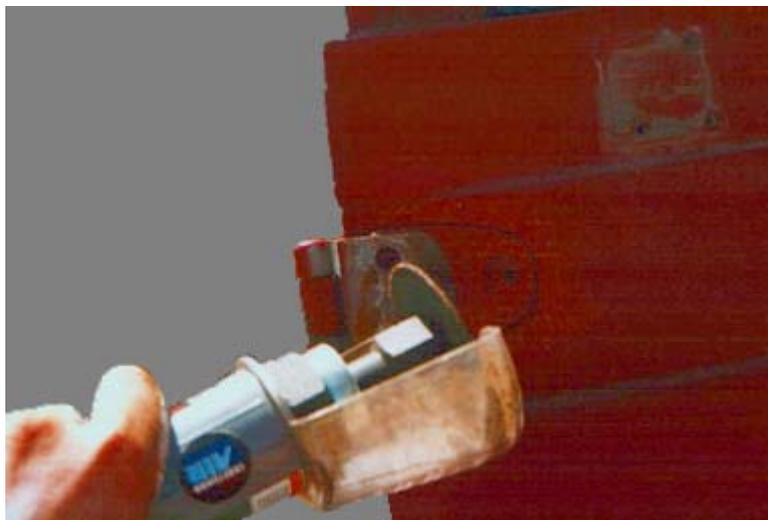
# Removable Doors

Resistance was futile. All of my friends had made the move long ago, yet I procrastinated. Finally, on my latest trip through Rubicon...I pulled the doors off. In an instant, I was hooked. There's no other way to "wheel" now as far as I'm concerned. Your visibility for seeing rocks, the lines, the obstacles, and the world in general, improves dramatically. You also get rid of about 60 or 70 lb. when you drop the doors. Not to mention the fun factor reaches new levels and you add a whole new look to your machine. I liked it so much, I spent the rest of the Summer driving around town with them off. It was great seeing the reactions of Jeep owners when they saw a Samurai with doors off. Okay, enough testimonial...just do it!



Picture 1: Removing the hinge from the body.

The first step is to get yourself an impact driver (Picture 1). I got mine at Sears for around \$20.00. You absolutely will *not* be able to remove the door hinge screws with a regular screwdriver. Don't even *try*, because you'll strip the screw heads to uselessness. Next, remove the screws from the rubber straps on the inside of the vehicle so the door can swing freely. Now is the fun part (heh heh heh). The best way to get these little turkeys out is to first insert the appropriate bit into the driver tip. Then take the driver tip and hammer it rather firmly several times into the screw. If you don't set the tip real well, it very likely will strip on you. Also, the hammering is helpful in breaking any seals or rust buildup on the inside of the screw hole. Then, go ahead and attach the driver, and start banging away. You may have to hit it harder than you like to get it to move... but eventually it will give. Repeat this for both hinges on both sides. You don't need to remove the hinges from the doors, only from the body.



Note: The body side of the hinge is folded back over the door side of the hinge in Picture 2.

Once you have the doors off with the hinges (and hopefully screws) intact, position them for your cutting. The best tool for cutting is to use a small die grinder with a cutting wheel. You can also use a hack

saw...but you'll be there all day. A reciprocating saw may also work if you are very careful and use a fine toothed blade. It is easiest to do your cutting on the backside of the hinge (Picture 2). The first cut should be made to the top part of the hinge located directly adjacent to the uppermost screw hole on that hinge. (Notice where I've started to make my cut.) Visualize how the door will need to slide up and off of the hinge pin to make sure you will be cutting the correct thing.



Picture 3: Making the second cut. **Note: Picture 3 shows the body side of the hinge folded back out of view.**

The next cut will be the one shown in Picture 3. This cut is necessary. Take off about 1/8" from the top of the middle flange of the hinge. Since the doors are recessed, you need this additional clearance to be able to slide the door hinges onto the hinge pin once everything is back on the vehicle. Make sure your cut goes all the way through the hinge pin as I've shown and remove the whole top round portion of the hinge. Once you've completed this step, the body mounted part of the hinge will be able to separate from the door (in fact, it'll probably fall down). Take an additional 1/16" off of the top of the hinge pin. Once again this is for the recessed location of the hinge. Repeat this step for all four hinges.



Picture 4: Moving the mirrors.

**NOTE: If you have a hard time reinstalling the doors, most likely you did not take enough off of the top of the hinge pin.**

It's downhill from here. Go ahead and reattach the body part of the hinges to the vehicle. Don't crank down on them yet though. Hang the door on your newly modified hinges and see if it closes and seals the same as before. You may need to loosen the screws and slide the hinges around slightly on the vehicle to get the best positioning. Once everything is fitted correctly, it is okay to reset the vehicle's hinge parts with your impact driver.

The final step is to move your mirrors. If you plan on only driving doors-off on the trail, you may not want to fuss with this. However, I fell in love driving around with my doors off this Summer. You will too! The mirrors have a black plastic dust cover. The hinges for the cover are on the bottom and snaps on the top. See Picture 4 for the mirrors and a view of what the completed hinge cut looks like. Go ahead and remove the three screws holding it in place on the door. Try to be careful removing the screws so you can reuse them as I have. Use the impact driver possibly to make sure you don't strip the heads. Next, position your mirror in front of the door as I have and reattach with some self-tapping sheet metal screws. As a side note...the position of the mirror does change your optimum visibility. I used one of those little round stick-on "blind-spot" mirrors to help eliminate the "new-improved" blind spot. It cost about a buck and was worth it. Reattach the rubber straps inside and you're as good as new.

**Extra tip: I have a friend who got some seat belts from a wrecked early model American car. He screwed them onto the same location as the rubber straps with the buckle in the middle. By doing this, he doesn't have to unscrew the rubber straps every time to take the doors off. He simply unbuckles the seat belt, and he's ready to go.**

There...now you can pull your doors off. It gives a whole new look to the vehicle (Picture 5). And frankly, I think its an awesome look...don't you agree? Good luck and have fun!

