

Memory Foam Saddle Farkle

This was done on a Honda Silver Wing, but should work for most any similar saddle.

I used the Sunmate memory foam (this was developed by NASA) from DSI:

<http://www.sunmatecushions.com/> I got the discounted 3/4" pad

(http://www.sunmatecushions.com/sunmate_discounts.php) in Medium-Soft, 37" x 66" x 3/4", \$10, as of 2005, this is actually enough to make about 20 inserts which will accommodate 10 saddles. No, I can't sell the apparent remainder. The grievance committee caught me working on it, liked the remaining 33" x 52" piece, put it under her mattress cover and bottom sheet and now there's no way I'm getting it back.

Anyway, I removed the saddle, removed the staples and peeled back the driver's front section of the saddle's vinyl cover. The OEM foam averages about 2-1/2" thick overall where the butt resides. I slipped my hand between the foam form and the pan and just lifted it out. There's very little adhesive under there. (The SWing's saddle uses two separate pieces of foam. One for the driver and one for the pillion) Looks like they have some method of doing the foam forming right on the pan as the bottom of the foam form fills in all of the structural honeycombed recesses on the pan's surface. They don't need adhesive as it locks into these recesses to keep it from shifting and the downward pressure of the tight vinyl cover keeps it from going anywhere.

I drew a somewhat four-sided triangular shape on the foam form to cut out, estimating the area that my butt would live with some usual shifting about. I then used an electric carving knife to make the cutout. A sharp knife with long blade would probably work also, but the electric knife is so...so...'high tech'. ;->

I then traced this cutout pattern, through the form's saddle cutout, onto the memory foam to make two 3/4" inserts and cut them out with scissors.

I then flat-filletted about 1-1/2" off the top portion of the 2-1/2" triangular foam that I'd cut out of the saddle.

I then glued (using 3M #74 spray foam adhesive from DSI) the bottom remainder of the cutout piece back into the bottom of the foam's form, from whence it came. (I did this cut-it-out-put-it-back method to ensure a flat surface to place the two 3/4" triangular memory foam inserts.)

After much experimenting with different combinations of foam layering I settled on the above combo which is about 1" of the OEM foam as the base layer then the two 3/4" memory foam inserts on top of that for three layers that match the thickness of the original saddle. I added some duct tape on top along the seams where the two different foams come together in an effort to mask these transitions when the vinyl cover goes back on. It works well and is not obvious, however I may add some felt or something over it later if necessary. Feedback from some DIY'ers that have done this have added shiny-side-down foil to minimize engine heat, probably a good idea if you have this situation.

I didn't actually glue the upper layers together. They seem very secure as they are with the bottom layer's recesses again locked onto the pan and the vinyl cover re-stapled to the pan is

more than enough to hold it in place, plus the non-glued assembly eases later experimenting or alterations should they become necessary. I know that if I'd glued these layers, especially the top layer, to the foam's form I might not have had this seam as apparent. BUT, this 3M adhesive is like contact cement...a fast contact cement. I didn't want the hassle of trying to match the four sides and bottom positioning at one time as it 'grabs' immediately.

The result is more than I'd hoped for, I'm really pleased. When you plop down on the stock saddle you feel the firmness right away like a soft park bench, but the pressure remains mainly on your two ischium pressure points, and 300 to 500 miles later you really feel the firmness and the 'burn' begins.

When you plop down on a memory foam enhanced saddle you feel the surface 'adjust' to your contour for a couple seconds, then the pressure just kind of 'equalizes' all over the surface of your delicate derriere. Kind of 'caresses' it...(yeah, yeah I know, get a life). Actually it feels a LOT like the Bill Mayer saddle I had on the ST. I've heard that in cold weather this foam gets kind of firm, but eases back to its regular characteristics in a few minutes of warming use.

So, dear hearts, I feel that this was a worthwhile farkle. Total materials were about \$34; with \$10 foam pad, \$14 3M adhesive (which I used very little of, you could probably use a hot glue gun) and ~\$10 shipping. The actual work takes less than an hour, if you want to experiment with differing layering as I did it will take longer, but it's easy, just do your various layering, pull the vinyl cover back over the pan, don't staple it yet, and go for a test ride. If you try this and don't like it you can always put your cutout piece back in the saddle and you'll have your stock seat back.

Enjoy...

Whit Brown

Foam source: <http://www.sunmatecushions.com/>
and
http://www.sunmatecushions.com/sunmate_discounts.php





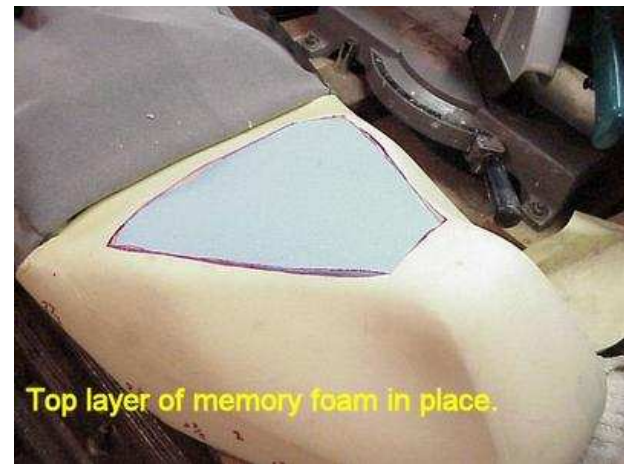
Cutout using electric carving knife



Filletted 1.5 inches off of top of removed piece, then glued remainder back into form as a base layer. This leaves 1.5" for the two 3/4" layers of Sunmate memory foam layers.



First layer of memory foam in place over base OEM foam.



Top layer of memory foam in place.



Didn't actually glue memory foams in place. Used duct tape in an effort to mask seams from showing through vinyl cover.