

1995 Honda Del Sol Power Antenna

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What's the Fuss About This 90s Tech?

Let's face it - nobody thinks about car antennas until they're stuck halfway up. The 1995 Honda Del Sol power antenna wasn't just some metal stick; it was a mechanical marvel that popped up faster than toast. But here's the kicker: over 60% of Del Sols still on U.S. roads today have either malfunctioning or modified antenna systems. Why does this 28-year-old component still matter? Well, try listening to AM radio during a road trip without it.

I remember helping a buddy in Ohio restore his '95 Del Sol last summer. The antenna would only retract when you smacked the fender - not exactly high-tech. Turns out, the original mast gears wear out after 15-20 years. You know how they say "they don't make 'em like they used to"? In this case, maybe that's not such a bad thing.

Why Your Antenna Might Be Screaming for Help

The factory-installed power antenna mast uses nylon teeth that mesh with a brass worm gear. Sounds durable, right? Wrong. Heat cycles turn the nylon brittle. One icy morning in Chicago or a scorching afternoon in Phoenix could mean crunch-city for those plastic cogs. Honda sold over 75,000 Del Sols in North America alone, but stopped making replacement antennas in 2008. That's created a weird aftermarket economy where used units sell for \$200+ on eBay.

The Three Stages of Antenna Grief

- o Stage 1: Occasional hesitation during extension
- o Stage 2: Grinding noises that make passengers wince
- o Stage 3: Permanent "salute" position (fully extended)

The Million-Dollar Question: Fix or Replace?

Here's where it gets tricky. A new aftermarket antenna assembly costs \$120-\$300, but the installation? That's another story. The entire rear quarter panel needs to come off - about 3 hours labor for most shops. Some owners in California have resorted to DIY hacks like manual conversion kits. But let's be real: who wants to

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roll down the window and push a button every time they want to hear NPR?

Wait, no - actually, there's a smarter way. The motor unit itself usually outlasts the mast. Replacing just the antenna mast (\$40-\$80) preserves the original wiring and saves about 70% compared to full replacement. But you'll need patience and a Torx T20 screwdriver. Pro tip: soak the mounting nuts in WD-40 overnight if they've been baking in the sun since the Clinton administration.

From Tokyo to Texas: A Global Parts Hunt

Japan's aftermarket scene has kept these roadsters alive. Companies like Mitsurugi Ltd. still produce period-correct components, though shipping costs to Europe or North America can double the price. Meanwhile, salvage yards in Florida claim they can source a working antenna in 48 hours - for a premium. It's become a weird mix of vintage appreciation and modern logistics.

Just last month, a German Del Sol club pooled resources to 3D-print replacement gears. Their design files are now open-source, but material durability remains questionable. As one member put it: "We're basically making Band-Aids for a system that needs surgery."

Quick Answers for Hurting Hoods

Q: Can I lubricate the existing mast?

A: Sort of. Use white lithium grease sparingly - too much attracts dirt that accelerates wear.

Q: Will a broken antenna drain my battery?

A: Possibly. If the motor keeps trying to retract a stuck mast, it could draw 0.5-1.5 amps continuously.

Q: Are manual antennas reliable?

A: They eliminate motor issues but require cutting the original wiring harness. Not recommended for purists.

Q: Do modern alternatives exist?

A: Some owners install hidden antennas, but reception quality varies. You'd lose that retro charm, though.

Q: How critical is OEM vs aftermarket?

A: For daily drivers, aftermarket works fine. Show car? Hunt down New Old Stock (NOS) Honda parts.

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