

How to Install the Kartboy Short Shifter in a 2004–2021 STI

This guide covers installing the Kartboy Short Shifter in a 2004 STI (GD chassis). The shifter install itself is the same for all 2004–2021 STI models, including GD, GR, and VA. The only difference is how the center console comes apart. The VA has a few more fasteners.

Parts in This Install

- Kartboy [Short Shifter – 2004–2021 STI](#)

Two zip ties are included with the shifter. You will need both: one for the reverse lockout cable at the shifter, and one for the cable slack under the car. This same install guide applies to the Kartboy [TALLBOY](#) shifter for STI's.

Install Time

Less than an hour

Difficulty

Beginner

Tools You'll Need

- Phillips head screwdriver
- Small flathead screwdriver
- Hammer like object (we recommend an actual hammer)
- Small diameter punch. Don't skip this. There are other ways to remove the roll pin, and we don't recommend any of them.
- 12mm ratchet and 12mm ratcheting wrench
- Internal snap ring (circlip) pliers
- Flashlight
- Paper towels
- Automotive grease (recommended)
- Jack stands or a lift

Step 1: Remove the Rear Center Console

Pull the e-brake up. On the GD, open the armrest and give the console a firm tug to release it.

Unplug the controls. These connectors are about 20 years old, so a small screwdriver can help press the release tabs. Don't force them. Replacement plugs are expensive. Set the console section aside.



Step 2: Remove the Shift Knob and Shift Boot

Unscrew the shift knob.

The front center console section has a button that works like a pants button. Undo it, work the trim loose, and lift the shift boot over the shifter. Set it aside. This exposes the shifter assembly.



Step 3: Remove the Reverse Lockout Roll Pin

The factory reverse lockout is held to the reverse lockout cable with a roll pin, which is a press fit.

Put the car in reverse first. With the car in reverse, the reverse lockout cable stays in position on its own. There is no need to go under the car and hold the cable with an Allen wrench.

Cut the factory zip tie on the reverse lockout cable. The cable can't come free until it's removed.

Tuck paper towels around the shifter base. If the roll pin gets away from you, it will stay out of the shifter housing.



Hold the reverse lockout with one finger, set a small diameter punch on the roll pin, and tap it out with a hammer. Once it starts moving, it comes out easily.



Tip: With the cable disconnected, you can still get the car into reverse by pulling up on the reverse lockout cable by hand.

Step 4: Remove the Shifter Bolt

Put the car in 5th gear for more room.

Remove the bolt that goes through the shifter arm. It's 12mm on both sides. A ratchet and a ratcheting wrench make this easier. It has a lock nut, so it will turn with resistance until the nut is off. Keep this bolt and nut. You will reuse them.



Step 5: Remove the Snap Ring and Pull the Shifter

At the bottom of the shifter is an internal snap ring. The shifter will not come out until it's released.

Use internal snap ring pliers to compress the snap ring and start it out of its groove. Once it starts to lift, use a flathead screwdriver to pry it the rest of the way up. The snap ring can stay on the shifter.



Pull up firmly on the shifter to remove it.



There are two O-rings in the ball cup assembly. One should stay in the cup in the shifter housing. The other stays on the ball pivot cup on the shifter. Check that the lower O-ring is still in the housing.

Step 6: Bench Work – Transfer Parts to the Kartboy Short Shifter

Remove these parts from the factory shifter. You'll reuse them:

- Reverse lockout. On some 2004 models the top piece comes off, so keep track of it.
- Shift boot retainer (two Phillips head screws)
- Rubber spring seat
- Ball cup
- Retaining clip (snap ring)

The crush tube in the pivot will fall out. It does not get reused.





Factory vs. Kartboy

Both shifters pivot in the same place. The Kartboy shifter has a longer lower section below the pivot, which moves the shift shaft farther for the same movement at the knob. That is what shortens the throw. The Kartboy shifter is also shorter above the pivot than the factory shifter, which reduces throw further.



Note: The Kartboy x Turn In Concepts Tallboy uses the same lower short shift geometry with a stock shift knob height.

Step 7: Bench Work – Build Up the Kartboy Short Shifter

1. Slide the rubber spring seat over the top of the shifter and push it to the bottom.
2. Line up the boot retainer with the two holes and install the Phillips screws. There is no torque spec. Tighten until snug without stripping the plastic.
3. Slide the internal snap ring over the shift ball. **Do this on the bench.** It can't be installed once the shifter is in the car.
4. Line up the reverse lockout with the slot in the shifter. Start the roll pin just far enough that it holds in place without blocking the internal bore of the shifter. This leaves room to feed the reverse lockout cable up through the shifter in Step 10.

Grease the ball cup and pivot area before installation. This was skipped in the video for cleanliness, but it's recommended.





Step 8: Install the Shifter and Snap Ring

Confirm the O-ring is still in the shifter cup in the housing.

Drop the shifter and ball cup into place.

Position the snap ring so the ends point toward the driver's seat. If they face the other way, they are very hard to reach with the pliers.

Compress the snap ring with internal snap ring pliers and start it into the groove. Use a flathead to push it fully into the groove. You should hear it click. Pull up on the shifter a few times to make sure it stays seated.



Step 9: Reinstall the Shifter Bolt

Push the shifter toward the passenger side. This helps line up the shift linkage with the shifter.

Insert the factory bolt and put the lock nut on the passenger side. Run the nut on by hand until the lock nut engages, then tighten with the 12mm ratchet and wrench until snug. The crush tube lets the shifter pivot freely even when tight.



Step 10: Reconnect the Reverse Lockout Cable

Pull up on the reverse lockout cable and put the car in reverse. The cable stays up on its own in reverse.

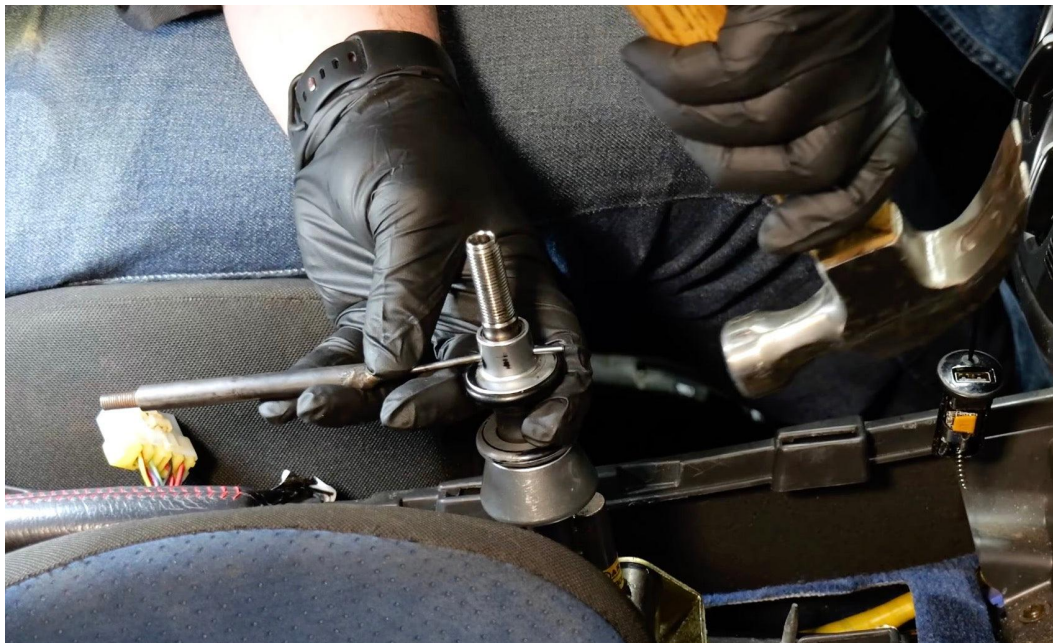
Feed the cable up through the bottom of the shifter. Rotate the reverse lockout until the hole in the lockout lines up with the hole in the cable end. Put the punch through both to hold them in alignment.



Drive the roll pin through with a hammer as the punch comes out. If you're out of room for the hammer, you can tap the pin in with the side of the snap ring pliers.

The roll pin must be flush with the reverse lockout. The shift knob needs that clearance.

Test every gear, 1st through 6th and reverse.





Step 11: Zip Tie the Reverse Lockout Cable

Using one of the included zip ties, secure the reverse lockout cable just below where it enters the shifter, in the same place as the factory zip tie. Tighten it and cut it flush.



Step 12: Reinstall the Interior

1. Put the shift boot back over the shifter, clip it in on both sides, and fasten the button.
2. Reinstall the rear center console. Plug in the controls, feed the wiring through, tuck the wires in, and press the console down until it seats.
3. Install the shift knob.



Step 13: Secure Reverse Lockout Cable Slack Under the Car

The Kartboy shifter is shorter than the factory shifter, so there will be extra slack in the reverse lockout cable under the car. If the slack hangs below the shifter cup, it can contact the driveshaft.



Raise the car on a lift or jack stands.

Pull the cable slack toward the driver's side of the car, away from the driveshaft. Use the second included zip tie to secure the cable to the lower shifter stay. Cut the zip tie flush.



Ready To Install?

- Kartboy [Short Shifter – 2004–2021 STI](#)
- Kartboy [Shifter Bushings](#). Install video coming soon.

Watch the [full install](#) video on the Kartboy YouTube channel.

Questions? Email supportboy@kartboy.com for quickest response, or message us on Instagram or Facebook

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