



The secret to doing your own dash is to roughly sketch out your plan on a piece of MDF... ...and then when you come back from making the coffee, as if by magic your dash is complete

OK, it wasn't as simple as all that. I will go into this in more detail exactly how I did all this. Basically I measured the size and hole left by the ex-mini dash and transferred it onto a piece of MDF. I then decided on what instruments I wanted. Well I'm someone who likes to be informed so I had to have a dial for each bit, this meant 6 gauges plus a Speedo and a Tacho.

Then I wanted to replace all the switches so I added a bank of switches, some with indicator lights and then several indicator lights for main beam, indicators, oil warning etc. I got some thin fire retardant foam and used the dashboard as a template. I then got some speaker cabinet cloth and did the same leaving a good two inches extra all around. All the holes were cut out of the MDF. Using a spray glue I coated the MDF and then stuck down the foam.

Once dry and stuck I cut away the foam showing through all the holes and trimmed the edges. I then sprayed the foam with glue and stuck it to the cabinet cloth. Once dry I trimmed the cloth around the edge to leave about one inch for me to wrap over the edges of the dashboard. I did this and used an electric staple gun to fix the cloth on the back of the dash. The dial holes needed cutting through, so in each one I cut an astrix or star type pattern and then pulled the triangle pieces (like a pizza is cut) through the hole and stapled them onto the back. The other holes I just carefully cut out with a sharp knife.

The glove box I cut using a jigsaw with the smallest blade I could find. It was a bit tricky to start with but it worked really well. I then coated the piece of wood I cut out with the same stuff and attached a small handle and hinges and then fixed back onto the dash. All the dials were then fitted.

That's briefly what I did. The whole thing could be done in a weekend and apart from the initial measuring and cutting out of the dash, I did the rest in about a day and a bit. How much did it cost? Well not including the clocks it was about £20-£25 in material. I haven't worked it out yet but thinking back I reckon that's about what I paid for the bits not including any lights, switches or gauges.

Fixing to the car was another matter. I thought long and hard about it came up with a few ideas, but in the end the simplest thing worked very well. When I get round to the step by step guide I hope to do, I can go into more detail.

If you have any questions relating to this or any other part of the re-build please email pete@minirally.com.