

Basic Case Mods Part 1-3

Case Mods Article (Part 1)

In part one of this three part series, we will be looking at the first mod that I added to my Antec tower case - the front panel LED.

A very simple mod to do- and having such a very cool effect - here is the finished product!



How did I do that? well.. it really is quite simple. (as I stated earlier)

Materials Needed:

- One LED (preferably super-bright)
- Hot Glue Gun (w/glue)
- Drill or Dremel Tool
- Molex connector
- A 3.5" plate cover
- About 20 minutes free time

The LED can be any kind really - but it should be bright. I got mine from one of those LED keychains - those work well because they can handle high voltages (i.e. 5v directly from the Power supply in a computer) Also - you don't have to have a 3.5" bay cover - you could just as easily mount the LED in the front bezel itself.

Procedure:

Mounting is as simple as you can imagine it. Use the drill or Dremel to drill a hole in the drive bay cover - make sure you measure so that the light is centered in the front bezel of the case first. Make the hole big enough so that the light can be mounted at an angle (upwards) so the light is dissipated inside the case door better. Get the light positioned correctly - and hot glue it in place (as neatly as possible) The two leads from the back of the LED hook directly up to the +5v and Ground on the molex connector. If you need some voltage limiter, you are on your own - I just hooked mine right up to the molex. Test before you install (of course) MAN that sucker is bright! Here are some pics of the finished product - as well as the molex connector. (sorry the pic is fuzzy, the camera doesn't focus well at 5 inches away)





You will also note in the first pic above - I mounted a sheet of aluminum in the front of the door - this helped dissipate the light inside the door even more - making more of a glow through the door vents- instead of just a bright directional light.

Conclusions:

Obviously this mod is best done on a case with a vented front door. It could of course be changed to cover many other aspects - like putting a light source behind a front bezel grill. I have seen it done. Believe me - you won't be the first (and neither was I!)

All in all - A very easy mod - but very good looking at the same time. And at a total cost of under \$10 US, the cosmetic benefit is well worth the cost on this case!

Case Mods Article (Part DOS)

That's part two for those of you who are spanish-speaking-impaired. Now we will be looking at my 120mm top mount fan. I chose to make it an exhaust fan- but you could just as easily make it an intake. My only worry was with the fan being on top like this- dust will just be invited into your case. But, to each their own. On with the MOD!!!



Here is a pic of the blowhole at a distance.

Indeed- it is large!

Materials Needed:

- Biga\$\$ fan
- Screws to mount it with
- Dremel Tool with Carbon Re-enforced cutting wheels (ESSENTIAL)
- Drill for screw holes

Procedure:

Simple enough - cut a hole! This job would best be done with the case empty of parts. And make sure where you will be mounting the fan will not be in the way of CD drives or the Power Supply. (mine fit just between the power supply and the drives, with about an inch of the fan over the supply) So of course this mod may not work at all in some cases. You just have to think things through before you start cutting- that is the most important. Also - trace out where you are going to cut with pencil on the case first - I can't stress this enough- Don't cut until you are happy with the picture you are going to slice out. Once you have a good picture on the case - dremel tool to cut the design out. I would recommend trying this on an old crappy case you don't care if it gets ruined first before you go ahead and slice up your 299\$ aluminum case. Just my \$.02! Once you are done cutting, Drill the screw holes for the fan, mount her up! Put on a grille guard if you like, (I went for the open-hole look) and put in a filter if you are making it an intake. Like I said- very simple mod - just make sure you are ready to cut - and are familiar with the tools you will be using before you go a hacking up your box!





Conclusion:

Well - I used a 120mm fan (the biggest I can find) But this mod can go with any size fan - and not just on the top! sides, front, and rear are all fair game. Use your brain a little - come up with something original! After all, that's what modding is all about - making a case that is from YOUR head. Do what you like. Some ideas: Multiple fans, Ducting systems, heat transfer systems? Try something new!

Total cost - Under 15\$, virtually free if you can yank a fan out of an old server or something like I did (good old panaflo)

Case Mods Article (3rd times a charm!)

This time through we'll look at the custom case window and the cold cathode tube. Head over to [LoVermeCases](#) for the Cold Cathode tube. Enough chat - lets dig in!!



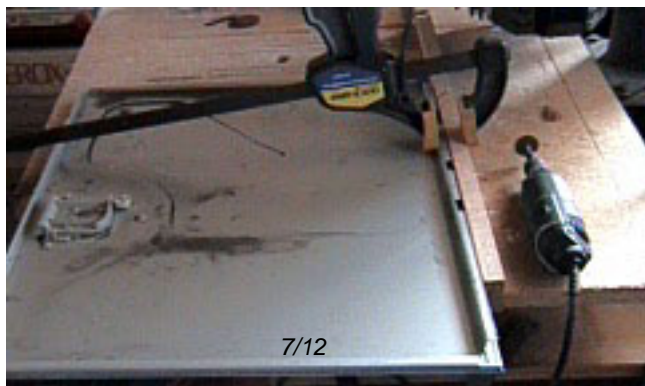
There is the window in all its glory!

Materials Needed:

- One Cold Cathode tube kit (or other light source)
- One Sheet of plexiglass (or other clear glass-like sheet)
- Velcro mount strips
- Black (or your preferred color) weather strip or black stripping
- Dremel tool

Procedure:

As simple as before - trace the window onto the case- and cut away! Again - get some experience cutting before you slap the Dremel down right away.





Here are a few pics from when I was cutting the window. I am not sure in the second pic here why the metal seemed to be magnetized between the plates, but I don't ask questions, I just cut, and noticed that looked cool! In any event, the metal dust didn't seem to effect anything, and once wiped away, it didn't return. So no worries there. I would recommend wearing eye protection - I didn't and regretted it for a little bit - a lot of metal dust and shards go flying about when cutting like this.





After you have cut the hole in the case, attach the plastic weather strip so that the edges look smooth and nobody will cut themselves on the edge. Then cut the plexi to the approximate size of the hole (a little larger to accommodate for the velcro strips) and stick the glass to the inside of the door. These pics illustrate how the glass attaches, and how I had to cut the glass around the lock mechanism. (a little sloppy, but who cares - it looks GREAT from the outside!!!)

The cold cathode kit can be mounted anywhere - I chose to mount it under the lower lip of the case - I wanted the light to be visible from the outside but not the tube itself. So I mounted it underneath the window, as close to the edge as possible so as to keep it out of sight.





Pics of the inverter from the tube, and the tube itself (look under the lip at the lower edge of the case)

Conclusion:

Here is what the case looks like with the side panel off, and on (through the window)



This was the most expensive phase of the modding - mainly due to the cold cathode. But also the most drastic change in the way the case looks. Very very cool mod, and I am very happy with how it turned out.

Final Thoughts:

This 3 part series is now over. (single tear rolls down face) Was the entire ordeal worth it? I'll swear it was.

But it's not really a true mod unless it's done in the spirit of the true case modder. Be original, come up with your own ideas. Do things how you want and it will work itself out. As long as YOU are happy with your results, nothing else really even matters.

Total cost of project: (keep in mind everything is cheaper if you rip parts out of old machines and do what you can to cut corners)

\$5 -LED Keychain
\$30 -Cold Cathode Kit
\$3 -Plexi sheet
\$5 -5 carbon re-enforced cutting wheels for Dremel
\$7 -4 feet black weatherstrip
\$5 -Packet of sticky velcro strips

\$55 US

Worth it in every aspect of my mind! Judge for yourself, and happy modding!

Jazzman

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