

EAGLE EYE

by Steven Dodds

Two years ago, my wife and I took some time off from the humdrum and embarked on a 12,500-mile road trip around the country. We wanted to capture our most scenic drives with videos and photos. To get consistent shots that we could stitch together into a time-lapse film, we installed a dashboard camera mount. If you're planning an outing and want to guarantee blur-free shots, this rig works for any camera with a threaded hole in the base for a tripod. You'll need to customize the mount to match the angle of your car's windshield, the depth of the dash, and the width of your camera.

MAKE IT

1. Use the scrap cardboard and tape to make a mock-up of your mount. Add 3 or 4" to the length to determine the rough size of the aluminum plate you'll need. With some luck you can get a piece of scrap aluminum cut to size at a metal fabricator's shop. Otherwise you'll have to cut it down with a hacksaw. 2. To bend the piece of aluminum into the shape shown in the photo, make a mark on the edge where the center of the arc will fall. Then, using the 2" pipe as a form (any signpost will do) try to wrap the piece around the pipe and make the bends, making sure the long edge of the aluminum is perpendicular to

the pipe. Bend a little bit at a time to match the mock-up. The slope of the mount's front should match the slope of your car's windshield. The back should be more or less vertical, and the mount itself should be tall enough to keep the windshield wipers out of the picture. 3. Once you arrive at the right shape, saw off the excess material from the back of the mount and file the edge smooth. 4. Drill two $\frac{1}{8}$ " holes in the front of the mount for the suction studs to pass through. Fasten the studs to the mount with washers and nuts. 5. Take the mount to the car and stick it to the windshield. Place the aluminum angle with one side against the dash and the other against the inside of the back of the mount. Drill two $\frac{1}{8}$ " holes through the back and the aluminum angle, then fasten the angle with screws, washers, and nuts. 6. Get your camera and place the mount in the car. Determine where on the mount the camera should sit, then make a mark where the center of the threaded hole for the tripod falls. Drill a $\frac{1}{8}$ " hole at the mark. 7. Remove the aluminum angle and suction cups and studs from the mount. Lightly sand the two aluminum pieces and paint them flat black. This prevents the metal from casting a glare on the windshield [it also looks cool]. 8. Cut the cork or mouse pad down so that it's a bit smaller than the base of your camera. Make a hole in it to match the location of the tripod mount. 9. When the paint is dry, glue the cork to the top of the car mount with rubber cement. 10. Reattach the aluminum angle and suction cups and studs to the mount.

CAR CAMERA MOUNT

 **\$20** 

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/16" aluminum plate, about 4" x 13"
- 2 1 3/4"-wide suction cups with molded-in threaded studs
- 3/4" x 3/4" x 3" aluminum angle
- 2 1/2" machine screws
- 4 nuts to fit machine screws and suction cups
- 4 small washers
- Flat black spray paint
- Scrap of cork tile or old mouse pad
- Rubber cement
- Heavy-duty Velcro or double-stick tape
- 1/4" socket-head cap screw with threads to match camera tripod mount
- Plastic knob to snap onto cap screw

TOOLS:

- Scrap cardboard
- Masking tape
- Hacksaw (optional)
- Fine Sharpie
- 2" pipe, any length
- File
- Power drill
- 1/8" drill bit
- 1/4" drill bit
- Sandpaper
- Scissors

11. Attach one side of the Velcro strip to the bottom of the angle. Go back out to the car and set the mount in place. Stick the other piece of the Velcro strip to the dash, beneath the angle. 12. Snap the plastic knob onto the socket-head cap screw. Use the screw to bolt your camera to the mount through the $\frac{1}{8}$ " hole. 13. Cruise!

