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FOUR GENERATIONS OF MOPAR B-BODIES

By Steve Magnante / Photos: Steve Magnante



A flatter firewall, revised K-member, and some wheelbase juggling are but a few of the major changes that mark the second-gen '66 to '70 B-Body. This is where all the Street Hemis, Road Runners, Charger R/T's, wing cars, Six Packs, and other midsize Mopar muscle cars come from. This '67 Coronet 440 hardtop packs factory A/C, a 727 TorqueFlite, and the uncommon G-code 383 two-barrel mill with 270 hp. Don't be confused by the 440 nomenclature; Dodge used the numbers 330, 440, and 500 as model designations for many years. It has no bearing on engine size.



Third-gen B-Body cars run from 1971 through 1974 and are among the heaviest built. A wider track, yet another K-member change, and passenger compartment air vents built into the top of the cowl (and fed through the closed hood) mark the major changes. '71 to '72 models are considered the purest and have the least amount of rubber in the suspension and chassis. In 1973, Chrysler added sloppy rubber isolators between the K-frame and unibody and thick leaf spring bushings and clamps, as emphasis focused on a quieter ride. This '72 Charger SE has PS, PB, and A/C as the creeping crawl of luxury crap ballooned curb weight. At least it's an M-code 400 two-barrel.

IMHO!



Conceived during the smog '70s, the '75 to '79 fourth-gen B-Body still retained the longitudinal torsion bar front suspension but shared little else with previous types. Fast identification comes from GM-style bolt-in fender liners under the hood. Failure-prone rubber bushings abound and most are loaded with performance-sapping luxury doodads. This '75 K-code (360 two-barrel) Plymouth Road Runner was a one-year deal. For 1976, the Road Runner moved to the new F-Body Volare platform, identified by its transverse torsion bars and single-exhaust-only offset gas tank location.

Mopar's midsize B-Body platform has played host to a huge variety of models ranging from Richard Petty's Daytona 500-winning '64 Plymouth Hemi to that crazy orange Charger made famous by the Duke boys. What is often overlooked is the fact that the B-Body went through four specific structural redesigns during its 1962 to 1979 life cycle. We're not talking about the usual model-year sheetmetal updates but rather massive changes beneath the skin. Here's a quick look at the B-Body's evolution, courtesy of Desert Valley Auto Parts (800/905-8024, dvap.com).

First-gen B-Body cars were built from 1962 to 1965 and feature a curved firewall. Generally speaking, they're the lightest of the breed and accordingly were the basis for the legendary Max Wedge and Race Hemi package cars. This '64 Dodge Polara 500 two-door hardtop is powered by the ho-hum 318 polyspherical mill with a 727 TorqueFlite. It'd be way cooler with the 426 Street Wedge and new-for-'64 A833 four-speed stick.

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GROOVY FACTOIDS

- '70 to '74 E-Body Barracudas and Challengers are built on the third-gen B-Body platform but with a shorter 108-inch (110 on Challenger) wheelbase.
- B-Body cars have been built with the following wheelbases in inches: 110 ('65 A/FX), 115, 116, 117, 118, and 119 (excludes airport limousines and other limited-production custom orders).