

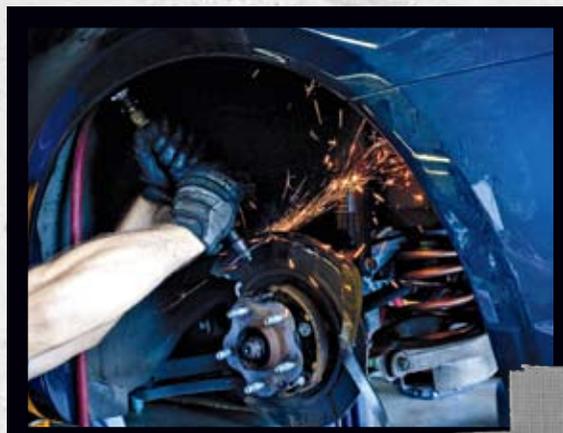


## 370Z Sport Brake Upgrade for the 350Z

The Z33 reaps rewards from its newer sibling.

**W**ith the introduction of the 370Z, Nissan brought forth improved performance in nearly all aspects—from more displacement and power to improved acceleration and deceleration. An improvement in deceleration not only helps the 370Z, but it turns out that some vendors (such as Concept Z Performance) have capitalized on this statistic by adapting the 370Z Sport Brake kit to fit the 350Z. With a precision-engineered caliper adapter kit, the full performance of the 370Z Sport Brake kit is effectively utilized, including the massive 14-inch front rotors and 13.8-inch rear rotors. Many liken this upgrade to the modern-day Z32 brake upgrade for many 240SX owners, due to the relatively low entry price and the nearly bolt-on ease of installation.

The front is a simple install with the adapter bracket (OEM brake lines will work). The rear dust shields will have to be removed or cut for the rear caliper/rotor package to be installed, while the OE e-brake system retains 100 percent functionality. This upgrade requires no master cylinder upgrade nor does it affect the ABS system adversely. To put these matters to the test, in addition to gathering data on heat dissipation, pedal feel and the overall braking improvement, we put resident hot shoe and *Modified* test driver Mike Speck in the seat of our 350Z. Mike was able to do a before and after comparison of fresh OEM 350Z brakes (with new rotors and Hawk pads) versus the Akebono 370Z upgrade on our 350Z. Nissan also supplied a 370Z to battle our 350Z (with 370Z brakes) to compare how the upgraded pads, lines and rotors—as well as the differences in suspension—factored into the testing. Our test track was the Bondurant Road Course at the Bondurant School of High Performance Driving in Chandler, Arizona. To make the comparison even more direct, we equipped our 350Z with Yokohama ADVAN Sport tires to level the playing field with the 370Z while using them as a control for braking performance across the board. To this effect, we didn't do any tests based on stopping distances because, as many of our readers know, BBKs



The rear dust shield had to be trimmed to fit the 370Z rear rotor and caliper.



Those are some mighty rear rotors. At 13.8 inches, they're just 0.2-inch smaller than the fronts.

often do little to affect initial stopping distances when the tires are actually doing the stopping.

A clear winner from nearly every angle, the 370Z Sport Brake upgrade is well worth it for any 350Z owner looking for an affordable big brake upgrade. Our initial concerns with this kit were all put to rest as soon as Mike Speck pulled into the pits after the hot laps were completed; overall braking performance has been improved to the point where the brakes and tires were no longer a factor in running quick times around Bondurant's Road Course. Improved heat dissipation, pedal feel, modulation and control, as well as better initial clamping power and the elimination of brake fade, were all direct results of the Akebono/370Z brake upgrade.

However, what we didn't expect from the performance comparison was a further evaluation of the data to reveal inadequacies with the way we had our 350Z's suspension set up. Mike indicated that the lack of rebound dialed into the rear of our Z made for easy, crisp turn-in but resulted in a bit of "jounce" and uneasiness in the rear under heavy braking. While this may be adequate for drifting, it doesn't necessarily translate to fast times around the track. In addition, when comparing the temperature data from the Akebono-equipped 350Z to the 370Z, there's a consistently higher rear rotor temperature coming from the 350Z, which Mike also attributes to suspension. Since the car sits flat on a much stiffer suspension, as opposed to the 370's stock ride, there is little to no dive in the 350Z, which allows for more evenly



Grippy Advan Sport tires were a necessity to get proper feedback from the braking system. After all, your brakes are only as good as your tires.



Stock (left) versus not.

Mike Speck blasted around the Bondurant Road Course, putting the new brakes into full effect.

### PARTS TESTED

- ✓ Akebono 4-piston front caliper (370Z Sport Brake package)
- ✓ Akebono 2-piston rear caliper (370Z Sport Brake package)
- ✓ CZP custom front caliper adapter with mounting bolts and washers
- ✓ CZP Teflon-coated SS brake lines
- ✓ Motul RBF 600 Dot 4 racing brake fluid
- ✓ StopTech 14" front rotor (slotted), 13.8" rear rotor (slotted)
- ✓ Hawk HP+ pads front and rear





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For comparison, Speck also drove a stock 370Z. That way, he was able to really judge how the 370Z brakes work on the 350Z.

distributed brake heat as kinetic energy is spread across the entire car, resulting in rear temps much closer to the front temps. Furthermore, right-side temps were higher on average due to a track configuration that mostly consists of left-hand turns.

Overall, the brake temperature data along with the suspension critiques reminded us of several factors when considering a big brake upgrade. Always ensure that you have sufficiently engineered other aspects of the car to suit the upgrade if you truly want to tap the potential benefits that a BBK offers. Tires are perhaps the most important upgrade that must be addressed when considering this or any BBK; without a sufficiently grippy tire, it doesn't matter how well your brakes perform. To this effect, we compliment our set of ADVAN Sports to the fullest as they held up lap after lap without argument.

Suspension setup is also key, as evidenced by our lack of rebound in the rear causing issues; slamming your car to the floor on an overly stiff suspen-

sion is clearly detrimental to how fast a car can 'round a track. With these issues taken into consideration, we can't speak more highly of the 370Z/Akebono brake upgrade for any 350Z owner out there looking for big improvements in braking performance. At this time, we don't believe there's a better kit that offers a similar level of price and performance on the market. Even if you don't want to pony up the cash for a new 370Z, know that you can reap the rewards of its braking performance for a relative bargain! **m**

#### SOURCEBOX

**Concept Z Performance**  
www.czp.us  
602-283-3500

**Pitstop Performance**  
www.pitstopaz.com  
602-266-7867

**Yokohama Tires**  
www.yokohamatires.com  
800-722-9888

**Bondurant School of High Performance Driving**  
www.bondurant.com  
800-842-7223

**}}** Rotor temperatures after two laps on the Bondurant Road Course (initial temps all within 125-145 degrees F)

#### '07 350Z OEM Braking System

(New OE rotors, fresh Hawk pads)

RF: **605** (degrees F), RR: **550**, LR: **445**

#### '07 350Z Upgraded Akebono/370Z Braking System

RF: **315** (degrees F), RR: **290** - LF: **295**, LR: **261**

#### '09 370Z with Sport Brake Package

RF: **285** (degrees F), RR: **233** - LF: **292** - LR: **247**