

I was stoked to get into another hatchback appliance and row my own gears. The Corolla Hatch comes with LED headlights, tail lights, and other great features totally standard. To my dismay, there were still a few more light sockets left using the tired old incandescent technology—so it was time to fix that. I poked around in my new car to figure out what I'd need to swap out to make it wholly LED. Up front, we had a couple map lights over the console that were still that ugly egg wash yellow color, and the same in the center of the headliner with the dome light. In the back cargo area, the sole light also bore that same depressing warm white that clashed with the stylish LED lighting of the exterior. Speaking of exterior—the only incandescent bulbs I could find on the outside were those that many of us upgrade first—the license plate lights. So that makes two map lights, one dome light, one cargo light, and the pair of license plate lights. My list was ready. My VISA was swiped. Let's rock and roll.

I began with the license plate lights. At the side of each clear plate light cover is a small square tab that appeared to be the clip that keeps the light fitted. A flathead screwdriver was used to press this tab toward the center of the light, a little downward force, and out she came. A twist of the bulb socket releases it from the lens assembly, and the T10 bulb was revealed. Fortunately, the Morimoto bulbs are not polarity specific, so you don't have to bother turning the lights on to check if it's plugged in right—just plug it in, reinsert the bulb socket, and then clip the light back in. The second license plate light went just as quickly. That's really how easy it was to swap both and make the entire exterior lighting LED.

Next up was the dome light—why? Mix it up a little bit between all those T10s I guess. First, I turned the dome light off so I could see what I was doing. At the front of the lens, I could barely make out two small square openings that Toyota tends to use for these lights as their release point. A tiny pick in a little opening, a little caressing, and the lens comes raining down from the headliner. At the center of the exposed dome light assembly (sans lens) was the stock festoon bulb. I slid the pick up above the bulb and pulled down to release it. The bulb went flying into the back seat somewhere to be discovered in three years—so just put your hand under the bulb when you do this. I liked the stock-like size of the XTR Festoon bulbs, so I grabbed one of those instead of the larger (and brighter I'd imagine) Morimoto Festoon. I held the bulb up against the two contacts of the dome light socket to confirm polarity, flipped the switch to the "on" position, and then right back off after blinding myself. I placed one end of the festoon bulb into the punched metal contact on one side, and then popped it in the other as it was designed. Lastly, pop the lens back on the dome light, turn the switch to on, and another finished light.

Map lights seemed a bit more complex since Toyota didn't make them the standard "push" type they use in many other models. So, I admit, I went searching for a video or some instruction on how the map light housing came apart. I found it pretty quickly, thankfully. Firstly, turn the map lights off so, again, you can see what in the world you're doing and don't burn your fingers on a hot bulb. The face of the map light assembly is just a cover. If you gently pry at the edges around it, it will pop right off, exposing the clear lenses of the map lights themselves as well as the inner workings of the map light assembly itself. The map light lenses can be popped off with gentle prying around the edge. Once removed, there's a T10 pointing right at you that you can just reach in and pull out. Left done. Right done. Pop the two lenses back on, then the face plate of the assembly, and we're nearly done here.

Up above the visors, there are a pair of lights, one on each side. On the left side of each light (no it is not reversed on the passenger side), insert a flathead and toggle it up against the plastic tab holding it in place. The light then pulls down. Nothing to unplug here—just remove the incandescent T10 and swap in the new Morimoto LED T10. The light then clicks back into the headliner.

Lastly, the cargo light is left. I used a thin flathead screwdriver to pry up at the end nearest the hatch itself, and down came the clear light assembly. Unplug the connector from the socket by pressing on the tab at the center and gently pulling it from the socket. You'll notice there's a black plastic cap covering the bulb and socket assembly. That can be removed by prying the two little tabs, one on each side of the socket. You'll then see the T10 bulb installed in the all-clear housing that remains. Remove and replace with the fifth Morimoto XB LED T10 bulb. Clip the black plastic cover back on, click the connector back into the socket, and click the cargo light back into the cargo trim panel opening. Done!

With this process, including documentation, I spent at most 15 minutes here. It's certainly an easy install, and one I consider requisite for any car I own—just swap everything out and never replace it again. Plus, the primary reason for most: being able to see with the increased light output! I could now locate that missing dome light bulb I had dropped with ease, thanks to the new Xtreme LED festoon bulb illuminating the back seat area intensely.