

Islander Freeport (#4)

Swim Step Removal

The swim step is attached to the boat with an aluminum pipe. The pipe is threaded through the swim step and into two plastic through-hulls, which are attached to each side of the opening on the boat's walkway.

To stop the pipe from moving and slipping out of the through-hull, plastic caps are screwed on the end of the through-hulls, inside the stern lockers. (Threads are caulked and screwed in.)



Inside of locker showing pipe from swim step with cap removed on right of picture. Note substantial amount of caulk/sealer, etc.



Removing pipe. (Turn and pull pipe through hull. You may need another person at other end to tap pipe with hammer and punch to push pipe through and disengage from through-hull on opposite side.)

On my particular boat, it was very difficult to ascertain what is going on and how the swim step was mounted because over the years there was a lot of caulk build-up around the fitting. Having no option, I had to jump in and break apart the caulk and the fittings to really find out what was going on.

You will probably find a caulk build-up on the inside of the locker where the pipe enters into the boat through the through-hull fitting. Get a pair of large pliers or mol grips. Apply pliers or grips to the outside diameter and rotate counter clockwise. The cap will unscrew from the through-hull as the caulk breaks away.

Repeat this process on the opposite side.

When the caps are removed on both sides. Inset a punch and gently hammer the pipe through. Make sure you have somebody holding the swim step, because once the pipe clears the through-hull (where you are hammering) the swim step can be pulled out from one side.

Move the swim step out of the other side and you will have it completely removed.



Swim step being removed.



Swim step removed (with pipe removed). Pipe slides out of swim step.

Parts that will need to be replaced:

Two plastic through-hulls

Aluminum pipe

Two caps that screw on the end of the through-hulls (available from plumbing department)



Picture shows old pipe and plastic through-hulls and cap.



Swim step replaced (after new paint job)



My experience:

In trying to locate new plastic through-hulls I was unable to find any that matched the same diameter as the pipe. The pipe, as you can see in the picture, was also substantially worn. I purchased some new through-hulls and had a friend machine a new solid aluminum bar, where the ends were tapered down slightly to fit the diameter of the new through-hulls. I cut the barbs off the through-hulls, as you will find you need to keep the threads relatively short. The caps were purchased from the plumbing department at Home Depot.

Reassembly:

I reassembled the through-hulls using 3M 5200 caulk to bed the through-hulls. I inserted the new bar pipe into the swim step. I used a lithium, high-temperature grease and lubricated the bar and through-hulls. I slipped the swim step and bar into one side of a through-hull, tapped the opposite side all the way through until it was flush with the swim step and pushed the swim set back into place. A helper then tapped the bar with a mallet from the inside of the locker until it started to go through the through-hull on the opposite side. I greased the end caps and screwed onto the through-hulls, which stops the bar from sliding out at either end.

Feel free to call if you have any questions regarding swim step removal. I am in the process of completely restoring Magic Mist (#4) and have stripped the boat completely, so I have lot of information relating to larger, more involved jobs.

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