

Front Brake Pad Replacement

1980 GS850G - by BassCliff (a.k.a. BikeCliff)

Please note: All standard disclaimers apply, i.e. consult your manual, this document is only a guide to familiarize the new mechanic with the procedure and therefor may not be complete, you assume full responsibility for the work you do on your motorcycle, etc.

I was surprised how simple this little operation was, but decided to take a few pictures and write it up anyway. The Suzuki shop manual has only a single page explaining front brake pad replacement and left out a lot of information that becomes obvious once you get into the procedure. Be sure to have a can of brake cleaner handy, as well as new pads. I used EBC FA51 parts. A lot of riders take their calipers completely apart and clean them, sometimes installing a rebuild kit. But I'm putting that off until later since my brakes are working OK and I just want to make sure I have good pad material.

Let's start with views of the left and right brake assemblies and the caliper bolts we will remove.

This is the right brake assembly.



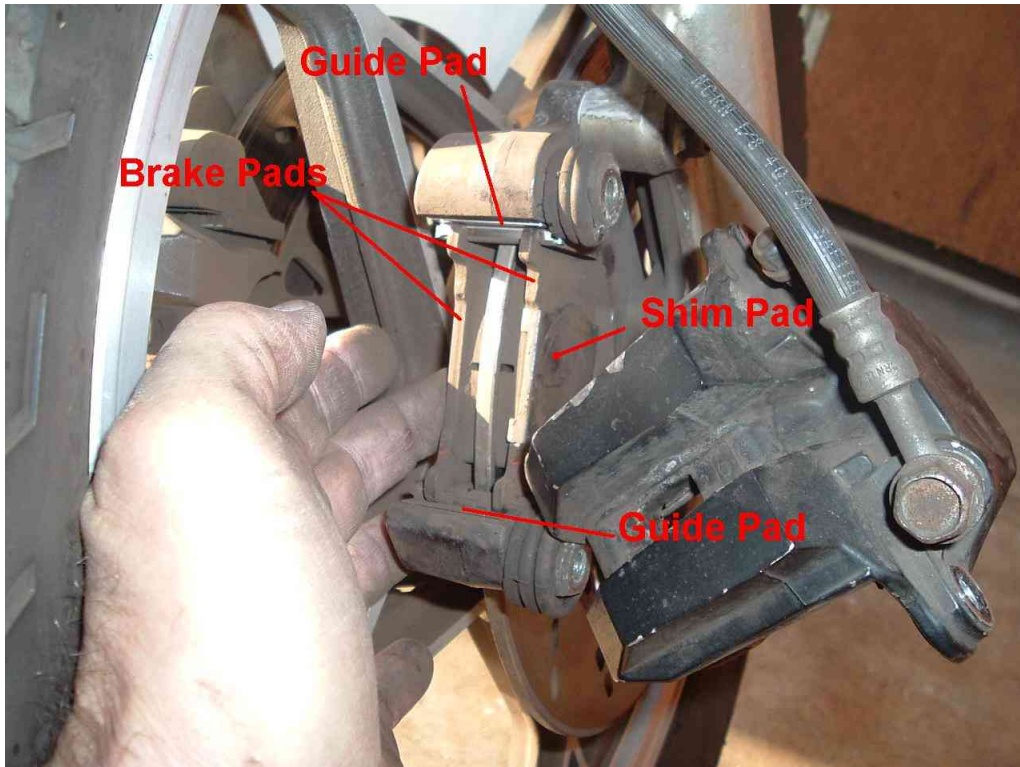
This is the left brake assembly.



Remove the two 12mm bolts holding the caliper assembly.

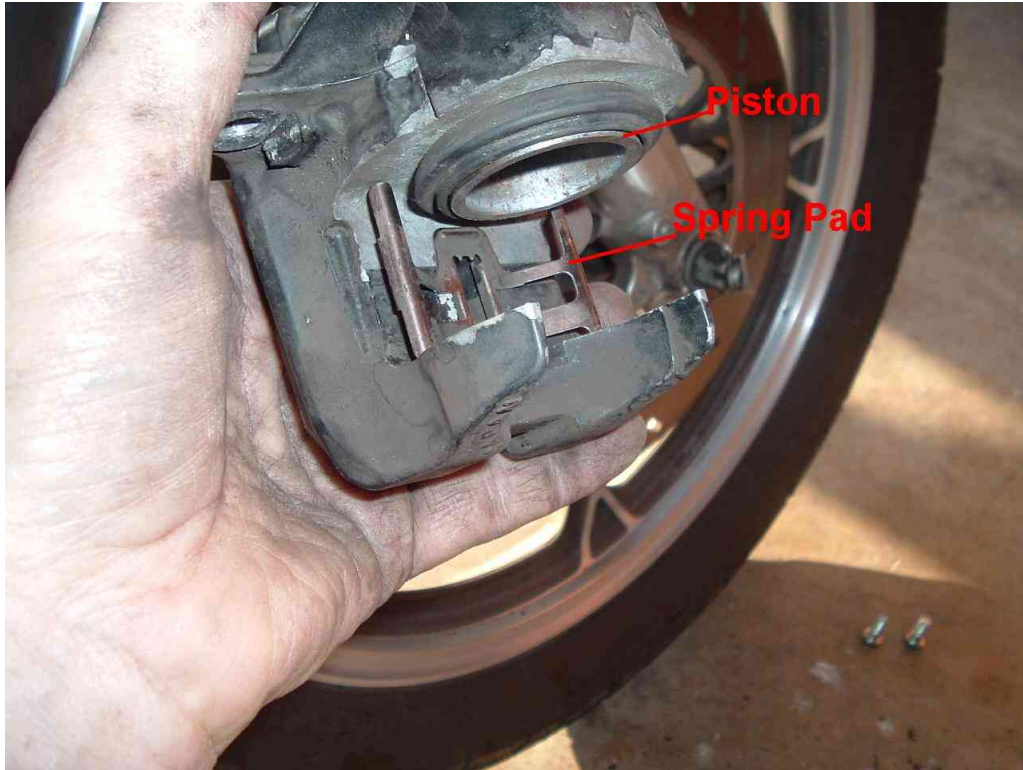


Once you have these two bolts removed, take care as you slide off the caliper. The brake pads and various clippy things will fall out. Here is a picture of how the parts are arranged under the caliper.



Besides the two brake pads, there are two guide pads, one on top and one on the bottom, and the shim pad, which goes between the outer pad and the brake piston. Do not allow the caliper assembly to hang from the brake hose. Let it rest on the caliper bracket.

Here is a view of the inside of the caliper showing the spring pad and piston. Spray your brake cleaner in here to clean it up.



Here is a guide pad (1), a brake pad (2) and a shim pad (3).



Inspecting these pads showed that they have a lot of life left in them.

So I just sanded them with a little fine sand paper and reinstalled them.



I'd say this pad definitely needs replacement.



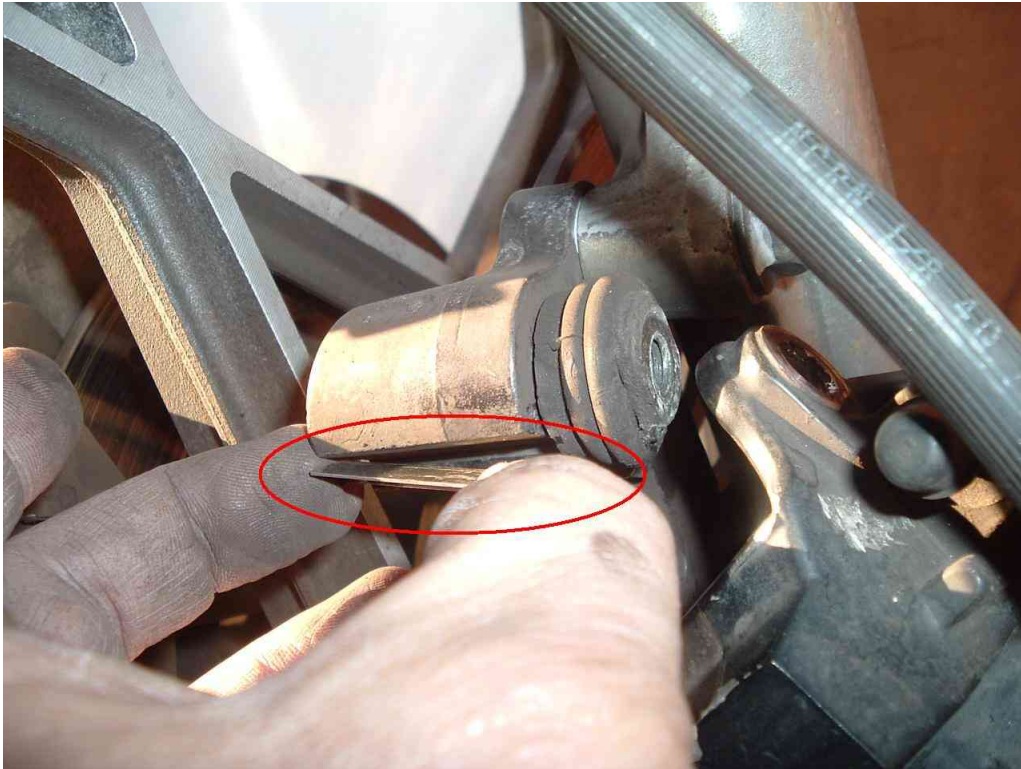
Let's begin our reassembly. First, I put a guide pad on the bottom, the wide edge laying on the bottom of the caliper bracket.



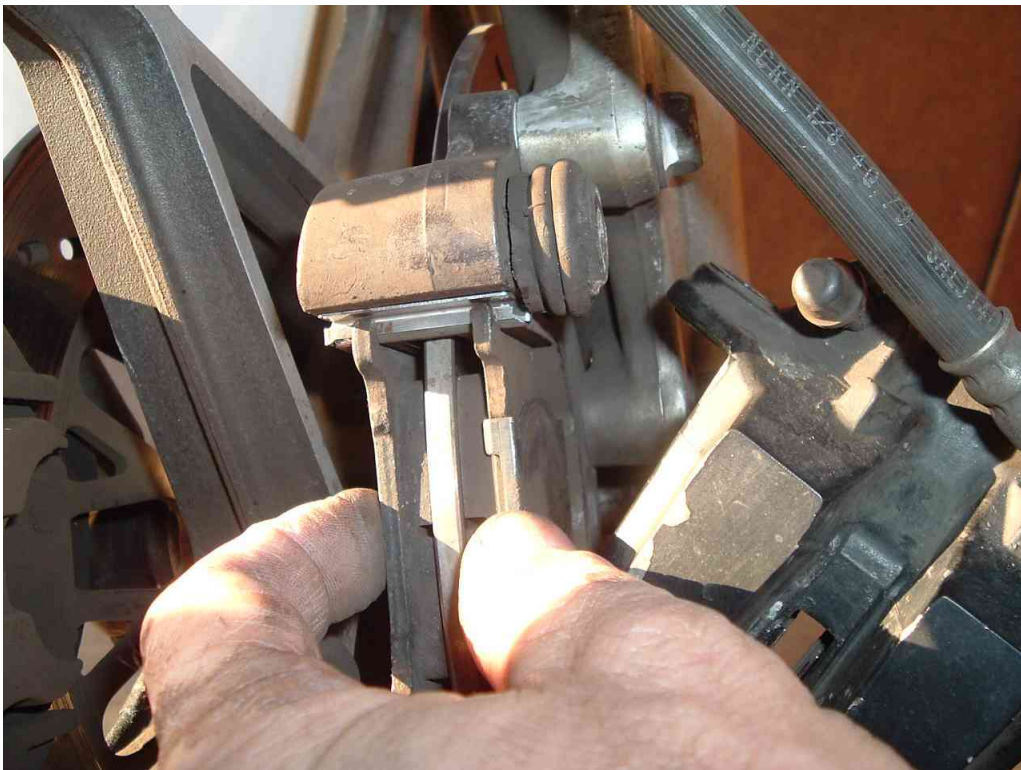
Next, let's clip the shim pad back on the new brake pad. This brake pad goes on the outside of the assembly, next to the brake piston.



Now it starts getting a little tricky, only because you have to hold several parts in place at once. Start by squeezing the brake piston back into the cylinder to give us room for the new pads. Put the upper guide pad in place (in red), wide edge against the top of the caliper bracket.



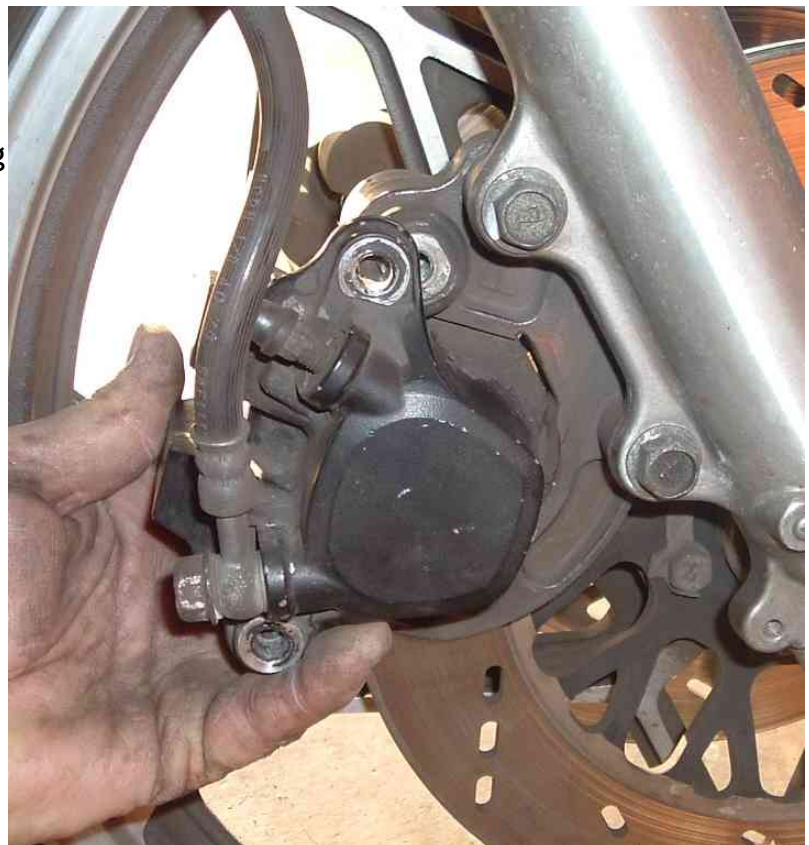
While holding the top guide pad in place, slide the inside brake pad in place, followed by the outside brake pad (with the shim pad) and hold it all together so that it looks like this.



Now slide the caliper assembly in place, being careful not to dislodge the spring pad. Use a couple of fingers to hold the inside brake pad while you push the caliper with your thumb. If you are not taking a picture, you could actually use both hands for this.



Here is another view of the caliper being put back in place. Make sure the guide pads and spring pad stay in place.

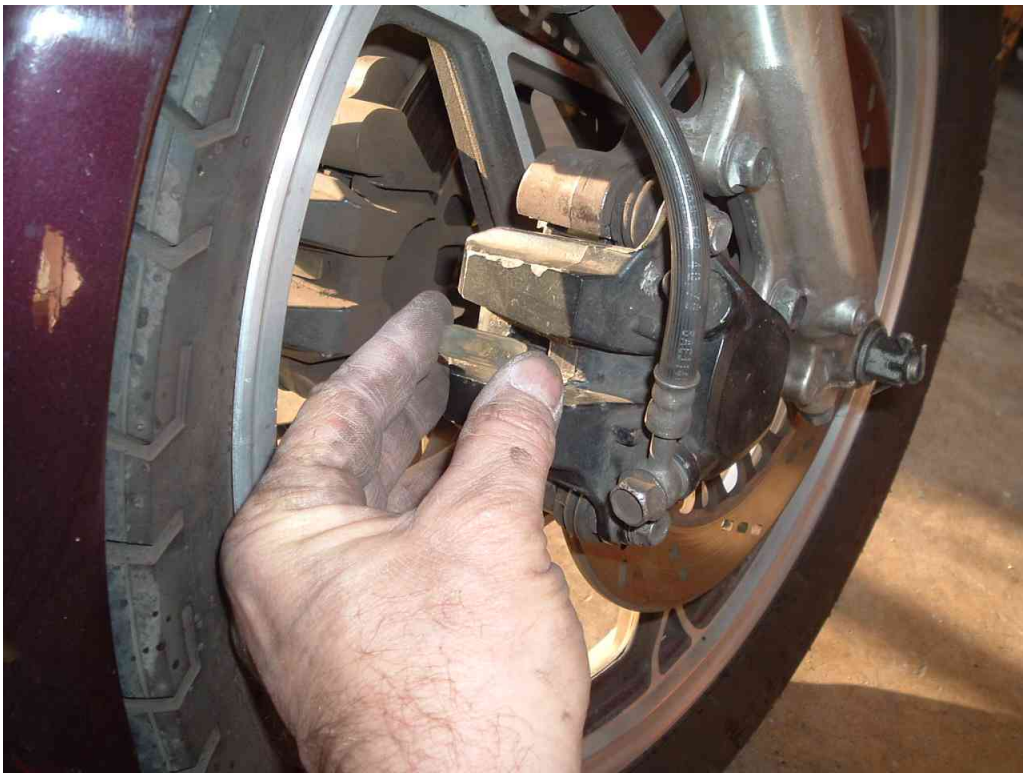


It took me a couple of stabs to get the caliper placed properly. You may have to depress the springs on the caliper axles to get the caliper seated in the right position.

Once the caliper is properly seated, reinstall the two bolts and torque to spec.



And don't forget to put back the little inspection window.





Everything is now reassembled. You may wish to bleed your brakes at this time. If you are really in the “restoration” mode, you will have stripped and repainted your calipers so they don't look a mess like mine. At least mine stop a lot better now.

While I'm away from work during my Christmas break, I hope to replace my old rubber brake lines with some new braided stainless steel brake lines. That will be quite an undertaking for me, unless I get a Mighty Vac for Christmas. I'll be sure to write it up and let you know how I fare. Until then.

Thank you for your indulgence,

BassCliff (a.k.a. BikeCliff)

My thanks to The [GS Resources website](#), [forum](#) and its members.