

Repairing A Jammed Telescoping Step Ladder, Version 1.0

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I was out on my morning walk, and it happened to be garbage pickup day. Of course, I threw a glance at each pail I passed. Nothing caught my eye. Plenty caught my nose.

Then I saw some aluminum tubes sticking out. Ah, scrap metal! As I opened the lid and gingerly removed the smelly bag of garbage on top, I saw this telescoping step ladder. They cost about \$140 new². Since I was looking at scrap metal, I didn't care if it worked or not.

After carrying it for a few blocks, I wondered if it had been tossed because it was so heavy. No matter, I stashed it in an alley and came back with my car.

Once back in my shop, I wanted to see how the ladder worked. To my surprise, all but one section slid in and out smoothly.

It took me a while to figure out that those tiny dents in the pipe were causing the binding. Someone had innocently rested the ladder against a sharp corner and dented it in ever so slightly. Given the close tolerance of these telescoping sections, that was enough. Lesson learned.



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² Bowoshen 16.5FT Aluminum Telescoping Extension Ladder 330lbs Max Capacity A-Frame Lightweight Portable Multi-Purpose Folding with Support Bar Anti-Slip EN131 Certificated



With the ladder fully extended, I drilled a 1/16th inch hole in the center of each dent. You can't see the dents here because I had low confidence that this would work, so I didn't bother to document it.



I installed a sheet metal screw in each hole.



and gently pulled the dent out. I took special care to spread the force from the end of the prybar over a large area so as to not create a new dent.



Periodically, I placed a straightedge on the section to see if the area was straight again.

Success!

It was fun to figure out what was wrong and to be able to bring it back to full functionality. However, I would not buy this ladder. It is heavy and can only be safely used when fully extended. It should only be used as a step ladder to avoid any new dents.

Near to this garbage pail was another one with four brand new truck springs in it. They still had their UPC stickers attached. So I did end up with some scrap metal after all.

Mopar 6800 4459AA, Coil Spring



Daystar, Jeep JK Wrangler 0.75" Rear Lift Kit, fits 2007 to 2017 2/4WD, all transmissions, KJ09140BK, Made in America, Black

It certainly was a productive morning walk.

I welcome your comments and questions.

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