Apple USB SuperDrive Optical Drive Replacement

How to replace the PATA 12.5mm optical drive in the Apple USB SuperDrive. Model A1270
Updated 3/7/17 - Model A1379

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INTRODUCTION

A simple guide to replacing the optical drive in the external optical drive sold by Apple for the MacBook Air. If your optical drive breaks, use this guide to replace it.

Note: Here's a method to hack the OS X configuration file for the SuperDrive to be used on the older iMac, MacBook, or MacBook Pro systems that the drive normally won't work with. **Use with caution!**

Open the com.apple.Boot.plist file in a text editor or in terminal use nano you will see a key <key>Kernel Flags</key>

Under it add the following line:

<string>mbasd=1</string>

Reboot your Mac.

If you have the later model A1379:

You will unfortunately need to replace the internal drive from another identical Apple external SuperDrive, as the contacts on the PCB are soldered to the USB cable directly. The model produced prior to 2012 is a standard PATA slimline drive, but any SuperDrive purchased from Apple in 2012 or later will need a soldering iron to repair.
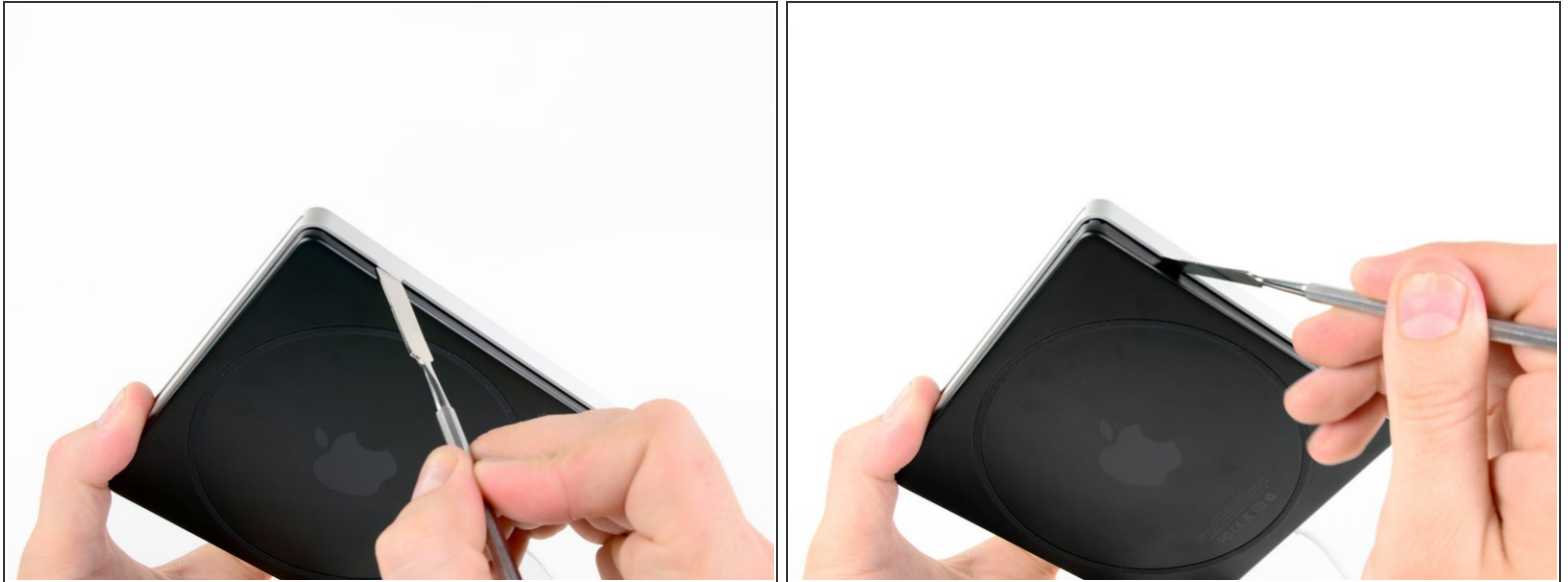
TOOLS:

- Metal Spudger (1)
- Phillips #00 Screwdriver (1)
- iFixit Opening Tools (1)

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Step 1 — Optical Drive

- To open the SuperDrive we must remove the lower case.

- The lower case is attached by 8 clips.
  - 6 along the sides
  - 2 on the back

Step 2

- Insert a metal spudger down between the black lower case and the aluminum upper case.

- Lightly pry back to gently lift the clip out of place, just far enough to disengage.

  ⚠️ Don't lift to far, or the clip on opposite side of drive will be wedged in place.

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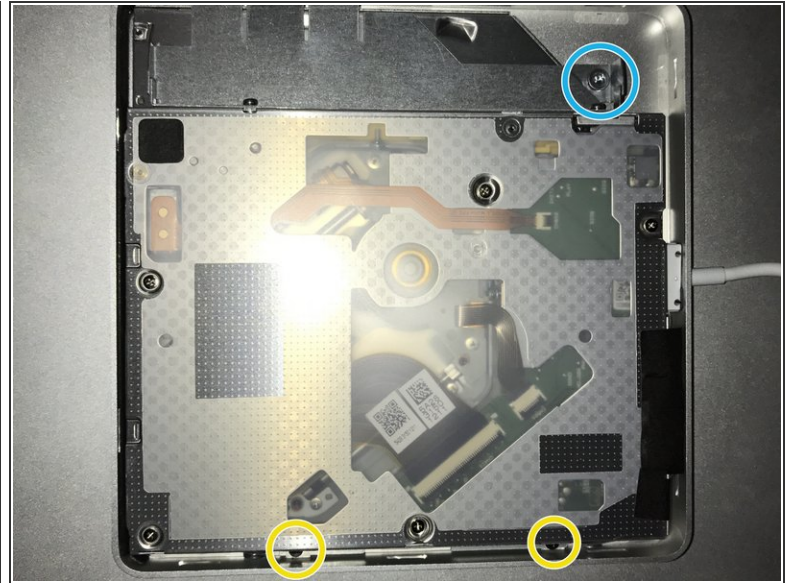
Step 3

- Repeat Step 2 for each of the 8 clips.

- Continue until all of the clips have been disengaged and the lower case is free.

Step 4

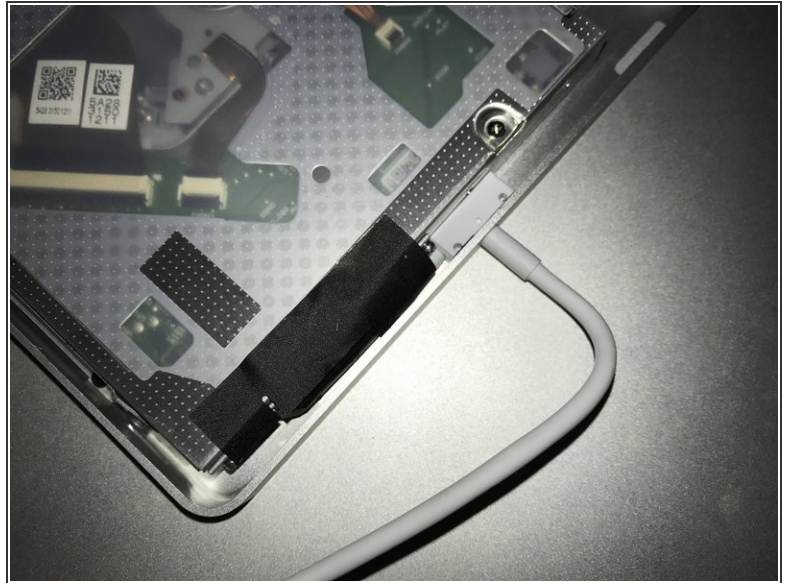

- Lift off and set aside the lower case.

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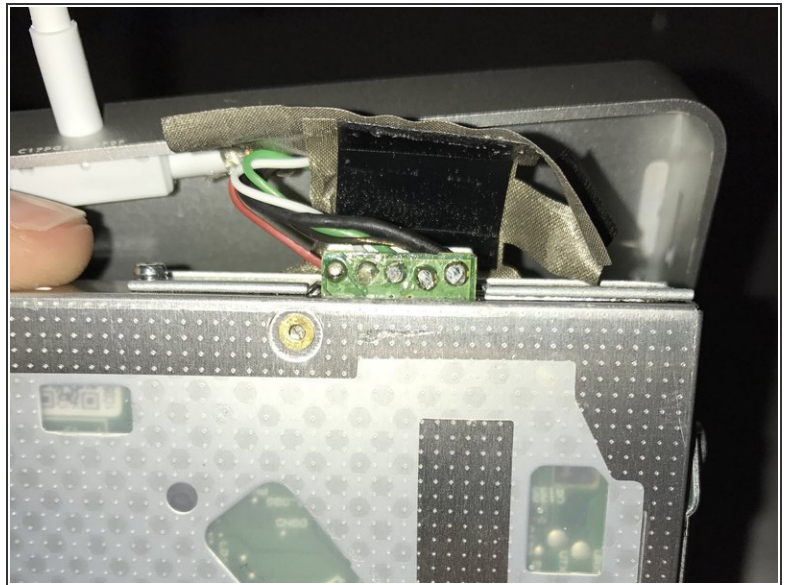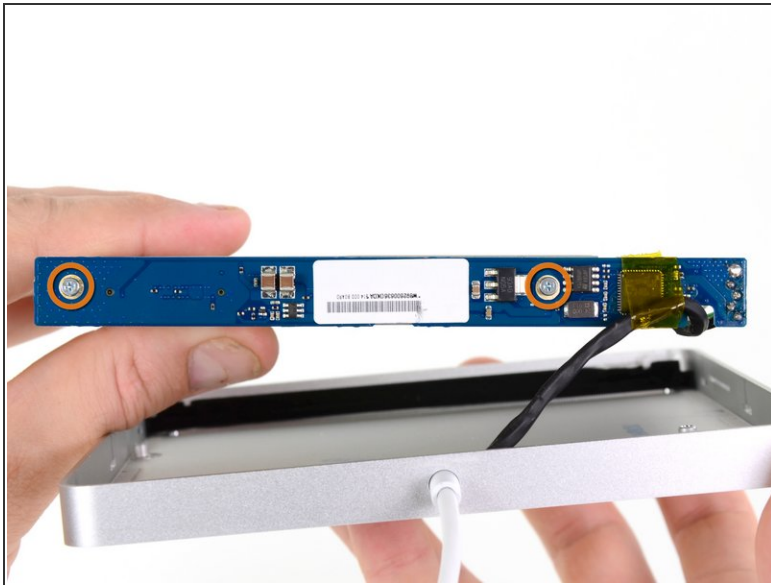
Step 5

- Remove the screws holding optical drive in the upper case
    - (A1270) three 3.8 mm with 1 mm deep head #00 Phillips head screws.
    - (A1379) 2 #00 Phillips head screws (I did not measure their length, sorry)
    - (A1379) 1 T9 torx screw

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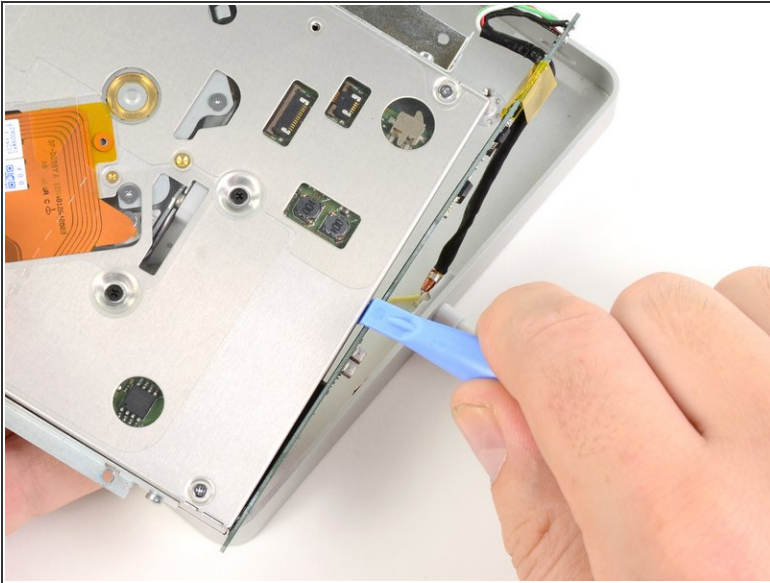
Step 6

- (A1270) Lift the optical drive from the thick side, then pull out.
  - (A1379) You will need to be even more careful with this model, as there is less wiggle room. Peel back the insulation tape to see the connector.

  ⚠ Be careful of the wires still running from the drive to case.

- When re-installing the optical drive insert tongue in groove side first, as pictured.

Step 7

- (A1270) Remove screws holding the board to optical drive.
  - two 3.8 mm #00 Phillips head screws.

- (i) (A1379) There are similar screws present here, but they only remove the metal shielding plate which gives further access to the USB wires

  - ⚠ Unfortuantely, you cannot disconnect the drive any further without breaking out a soldering iron.

Step 8

- Use a plastic opening tool to remove the board from the optical drive.

- The optical drive is now free from the case.

To reassemble your device, follow these instructions in reverse order.