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QBalance156
Member

Ignition Switch DIY w/ Pics

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 Member Since
4-9-2003
274 posts

 Ann Arbor MI
1996 VW GTI VR6

I'm sure a lot of you have already changed your ignition switches by now, but for those who haven't, here's a DIY on how to do it without pulling out the steering wheel and the pressed collar. Thanks VW for making access to the switch such a pain in the arse!!! There's another thread out there on this technique, but I thought I'd post my own version with some advice from my recent experience.

Reason to Replace?

When ignition switches start to go, there are a ton of different symptoms. In my case, my switch would not recognize when I pulled my key out of the ignition. It would keep playing "la cucaracha" and the radio would stay on even after I pulled my key out. Thanks to the advice from fellow vortexers, I realized that I only needed to replace the switch and not the ignition lock cylinder. phew...

Where to Buy?

I bought mine for \$8 with free shipping from <http://www.mjmautohaus.com>. It came in about 2 days! I'm not sure if this is OEM, but it will probably last me long enough.

Tools Needed

10mm wrench for the battery terminal
(2) 13mm wrenches for the joint
Phillips screwdriver
Small phillips screwdriver This is very important!!! It needs to be a phillips with a very thin and long shaft (try an eyeglass repair kit)

Procedure

- 1) Make sure that you have your radio codes for your stock stereo or that you write down all of your preset stations and sound settings.
- 2) Remove the negative battery terminal since you'll be working in the airbag area.



3) Remove the upper and lower steering column covers (two screws)



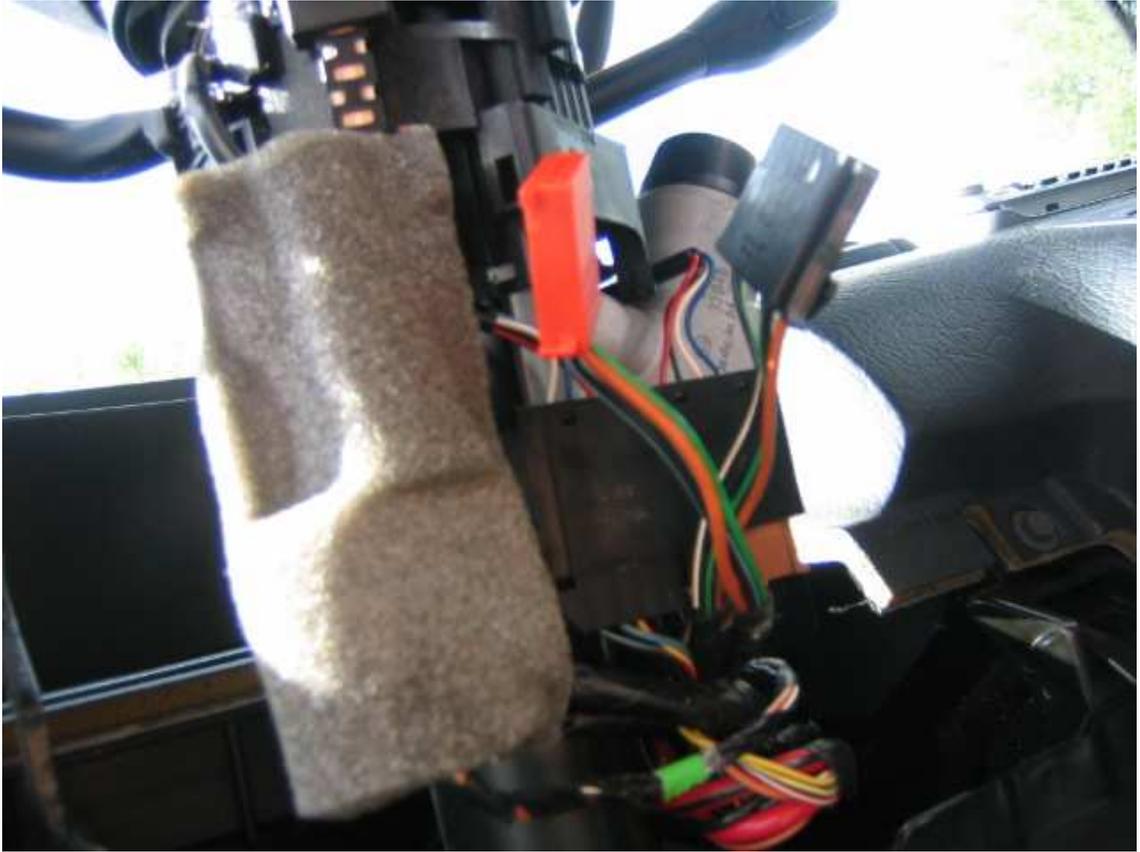
4) Remove the lower foot panels (3 total)



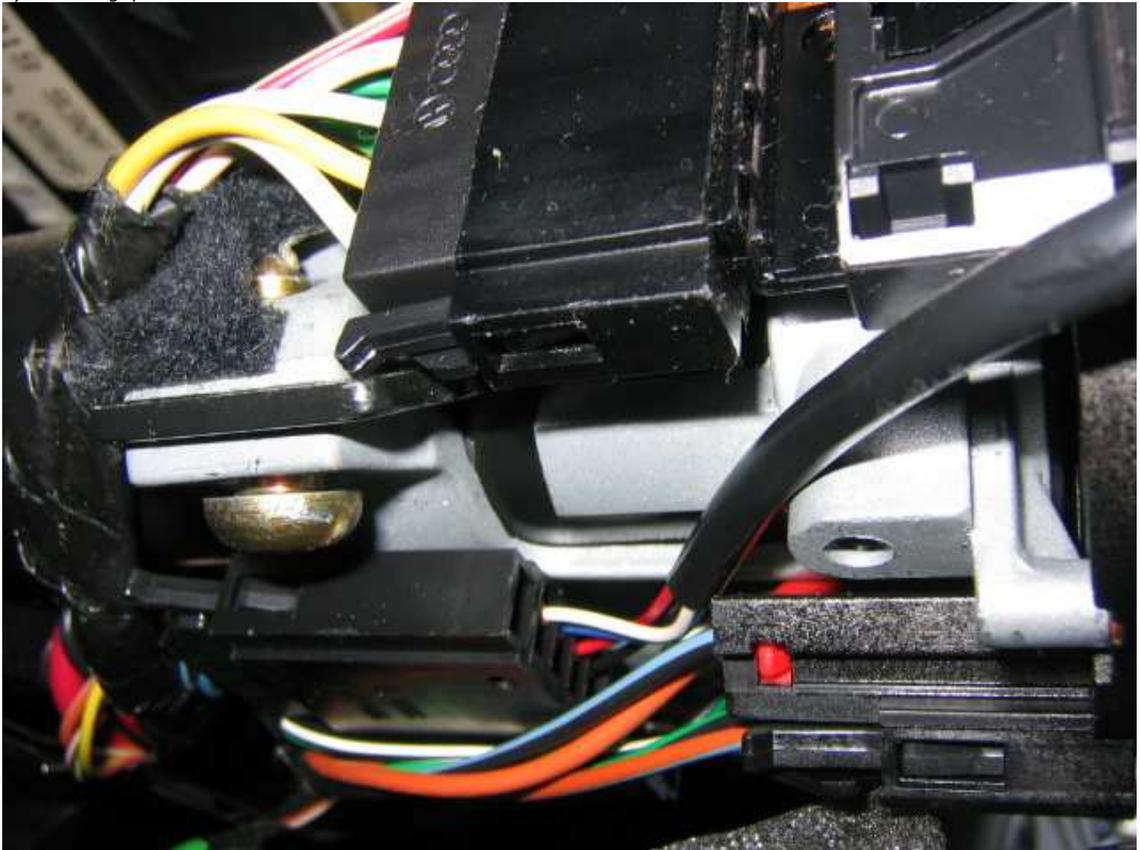
5) Remove the knee panel (remove the 5 screws at the bottom and pull straight down)



6) Unplug all (8?) wire connectors to the steering column



7) Use vise grips to unscrew the bronze screw since the screw head is smooth



8) Stick your head into the footwell and check out that U-joint. First mark off the position of the shaft relative to the U-joint. This will ensure that everything is aligned when you re-assemble. I used whiteout to mark it in two spots. Then use the a 13mm wrench on the nut and another 13mm wrench on the bolt. You need to remove the bolt COMPLETELY in order to pull the column out.



9) Okay! Use the steering wheel to pull out the column! Watch out for little spring that will drop when you pull the column out of the U-joint



10) So this is the trickiest part. To remove the ignition switch you need that small phillips screwdriver. Based on previous posts, I didn't know how difficult this was going to be. Apparently, the only thing that will work is a screw driver from like an eyeglass/jewelers kit. None of my "small" screwdrivers fit!! I started to panic because this is my only car and I had no means to drive myself to the store to get the proper tool. I tried bending a screwdriver, and that didn't work. I DID have a jewelers flathead screwdriver. Desperate times call for desperate measures. I used the flathead and the vice grips to make myself a

nice ghetto tool to get the screw out.

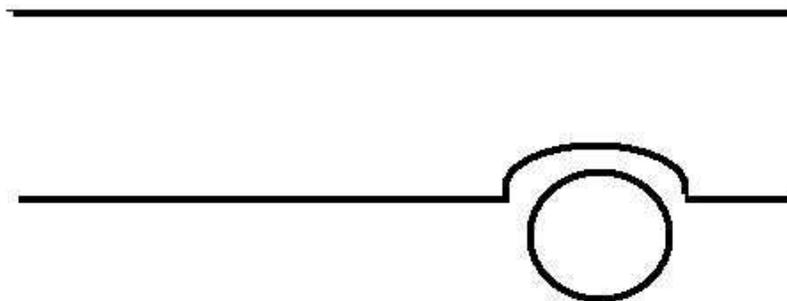


11) Just swap out the switches. My old switch had a crack in the housing which might have been causing my problems. Old is on the left, new is on the right



12) Just like the Bentley manual always says, installation is the reverse of removal. Some tips:

When installing the column back to the U-joint, don't forget to put that spring back in. When you put the bolt back in, take note that the steering column has a notch in it for this bolt, so you might need to slide the column either out or in to get it to line up.



13) Once everything is reinstalled, connect the negative battery terminal , and be prepared for the alarm to set off. Stick the key into the ignition and switch it to accessory 2 mode to let the engine recalibrate for about 1 minute. Fire her up and let her idle for 5 minutes to let the ECU stabilize.

Ta DA. That's it!! You're done!

Da_Mount
Member

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