

ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

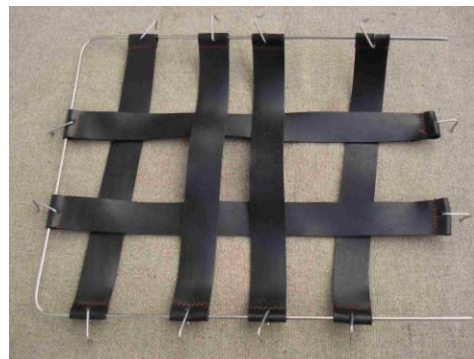
Although the seat covers on my MGB are in very good condition, the seat bases had sagged over the years, making them uncomfortable. One option was to buy new leather seats, since mine are just vinyl. However, I understand that basketweave vinyl seat covers like mine are quite rare, so I decided to keep them. I had made a previous repair by cutting up an old foam sofa cushion and forcing this between the seat bases and the floor of the car. This worked surprisingly well, but meant that it was difficult to move the seat positions because they wouldn't slide on the runners due to the friction.

Therefore, I decided I would remove these temporary foam inserts and replace the elasticated straps that support the seat bases (earlier cars used a rubber diaphragm to support the bases, but later cars like mine used straps).

Removing the seats from the cars was less difficult than I feared. The seat runners are fixed to the car floor by four bolts which go into captive nuts underneath the car. The front two bolts are accessed by sliding the seat fully backwards, and the rear two bolts are accessed by sliding the seats fully forwards. Once removed, the seats can be lifted out of the car.



Seat mounting bolts



New straps on wire frame

Since the straps are under tension, removing and replacing them can be a knuckle skinning operation, and three hands is definitely an advantage! The straps are mounted on a three sided wire frame and are held in place by wire clips, the ends of which go into holes in the tubular metal seat frame. Before removing the old straps it is best to mark the position of the clips on the seat frame so that the holes can be found more easily later.

I found the best way to remove the existing straps was to tackle the two longitudinal straps first. I pulled on the wire frame to release the tension on the clips at that the frame end, and eased them out of their holes. Once the tension was released the clips at the other ends could be removed easily. Then the four side straps could be removed in a similar way. Removing the old straps is easier than installing the new straps, since the new straps are a lot tighter.

Before installing the new straps I cut an additional membrane (from damp proof course plastic sheet) to place between the seat bases and the new straps. This helps to prevent the straps from chafing the foam seat bases.

I found that a G clamp acting on the wire frame helped to stretch the new straps to allow the clips to be inserted into the holes. I found an additional set of holes in the seat frame, as well as the four required for the new straps, so I used one of the better old straps in this position as an extra support.



New straps and plastic diaphragm



G clamp to assist with new straps

While the seats are out of the car it pays to clean and grease the seat runners and check the working of any latches etc. I'm glad I did this as I found the seat tilting catch on one seat was about to part company with the operating rod. I cleaned this up and welded it back in place before replacing the seat.

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November 2017