

A3/B4 clockspring R&R HOWTO

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Or, how to get from here:



Illustration 1

to there:



Illustration 2

and back.

I decided to start taking pictures only after having the clockspring fully disassembled, as in picture 2, so now I have to play them backwards :-). I do not go into details on removing the airbag or the steering wheel, as there is plenty of material describing these steps. We start with the steering wheel off the car and the airbag disconnected and removed, as shown in picture 1. If you look at pic1, you will see three Phillips head screws and a soldered back and isolated cut in the horn wire, going down to the horn slip ring on the other side. To separate the clockspring assembly from the steering wheel you have to remove those three Phillips screws and either disconnect the horn wire connector, or just cut the wire right now. This will come in handy later, when you will want to separate the slip ring carrier from the assembly.

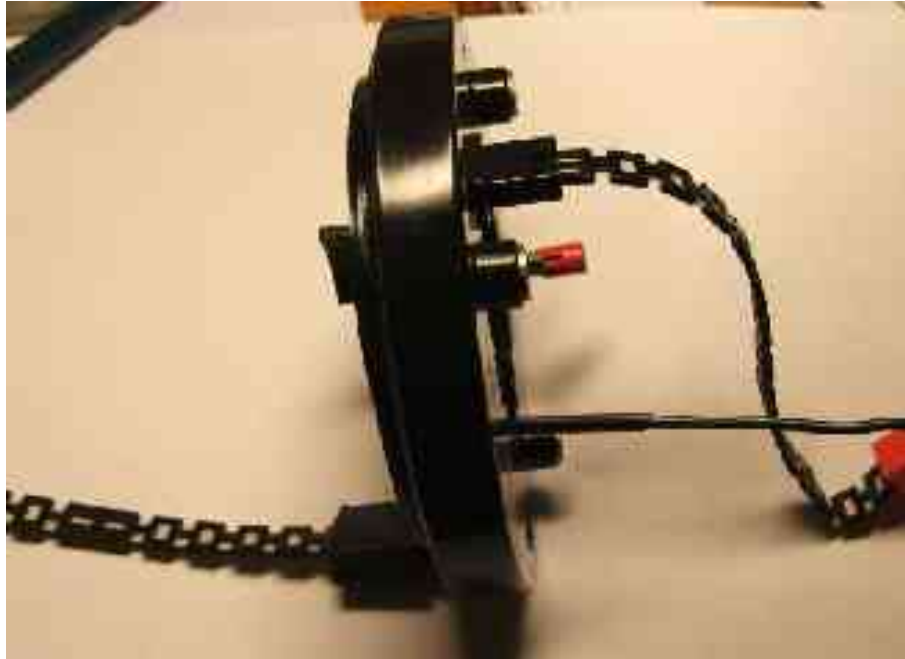


Illustration 3 Clockspring assembly

To unlatch the slip ring carrier you have to gently pry on the three prongs located inside the central hole of the clockspring assembly. Working on at least two prongs simultaneously helps a lot here. Do not be afraid, the clockspring enclosure will not open yet.



Illustration 4 Slip ring carrier unlatched.

Now comes the fun. We are finally going to have a look inside the assembly. The only remaining part holding both sides together is the lock pin.



Illustration 5 The lock pin.

From the side gently pry at a retaining tab with a flat screwdriver and slide the red button off the brass locking tab. See also pictures 3 and 6, where the side slots in the red button are visible.



Illustration 6 The lock pin disassembled.

And we are ready to have a look inside. Do you have experience in handling old style reel tape recorders? If yes, then this tape will be a piece of cake :-)



Illustration 7 Clockspring assembly inside.

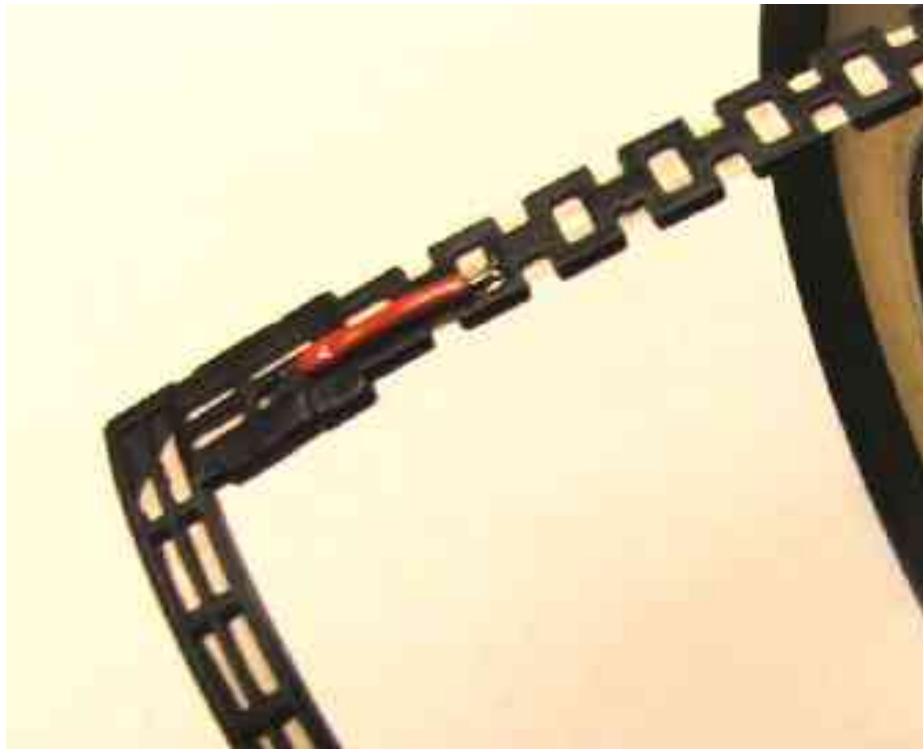


Illustration 8 attempt this at own risk.

And on the last picture you can see the reason, why I had to look inside the clockspring assembly. I do not recommend soldering this tape, do it entirely at your own risk. In fact, you are supposed to replace the whole assembly each time the airbag deploys. On the other hand, if you damage your clockspring by accident and just want to fix it while hunting for the replacement it is nice to know that it is technically possible.