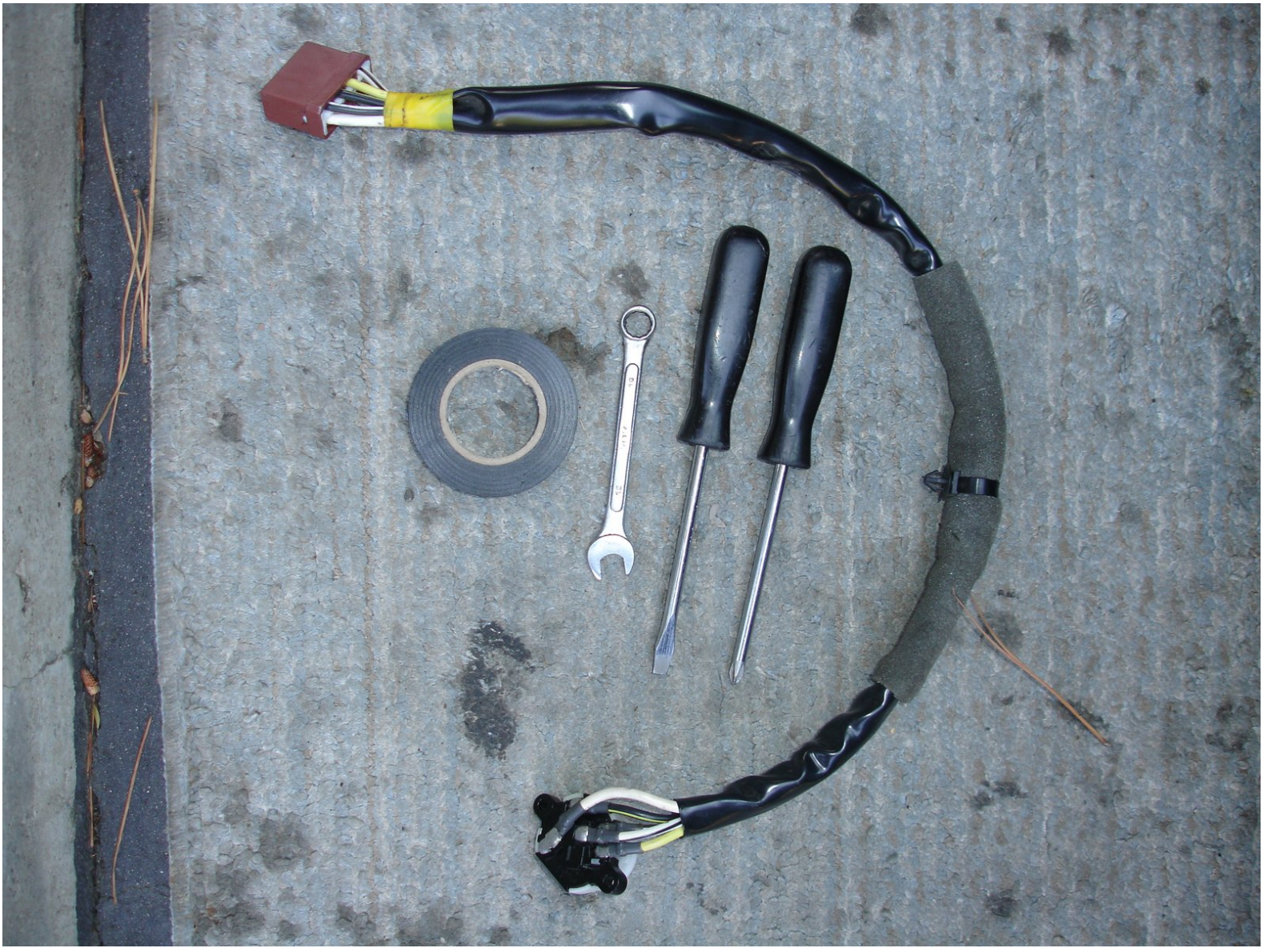
1998-2002 Honda Accord Ignition Switch Replacement

Replace your Accord's ignition switch.

Written By: Miroslav Djuric



INTRODUCTION

I originally posted this writeup on Honda-Tech forums but have migrated it here since I could better explain the procedure.

(Higher-resolution images help as well.)

A couple of years ago my 1998 Honda Accord Dx started shutting itself off at random times -- on freeway onramps, while parked and idling, etc. -- so I did some research and found that the electrical portion of the ignition switch had been recalled. I called up Honda of America and found that my car had already been serviced for this recall, meaning I was on my own to fix this problem.

So I did some more research on the internet to verify that the ignition switch was indeed the problem. At that point I had two choices: I could pay the dealer $100 for them to figure out the problem, and *possibly* honor the recall a second time(provided they found the problem in the first place). Or I could buy the part for $61 and do the repair myself. I chose the latter since I really want to learn about cars as much as possible, and I will be assured that the job was done properly (or at least learn from my mistakes).

DISCLAIMER: This posting is for educational purposes only, and I take no responsibility for your actions. You can't blame me if your car blows up or if your airbag deploys, or for any other reason whatsoever. Perform this repair at your own risk.

TOOLS:

- 10mm Wrench (1)
- Electrical Tape in 6 Assorted Colors (1)
- 6-in-1 Screwdriver (1)
- Digital Multimeter (1)
- Phillips #1 Screwdriver (1)

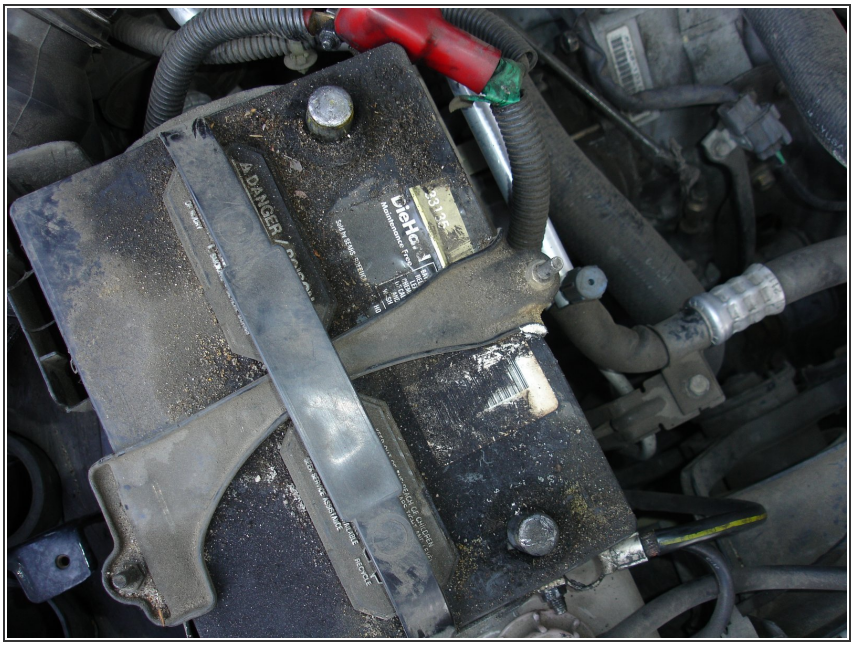
PARTS:

- 1998-2002 Honda Accord Ignition Switch (1)

Step 1 — Ignition Switch

- The tools and materials you will need:
  - 10 mm Wrench
  - Phillips Screwdriver
  - Flathead Screwdriver
  - Electrical Tape
  - Multimeter (not shown)
  - Electrical portion of the Honda Accord ignition switch

Step 2



- Disconnect the battery. This is especially important because you're going to be working near the airbag.

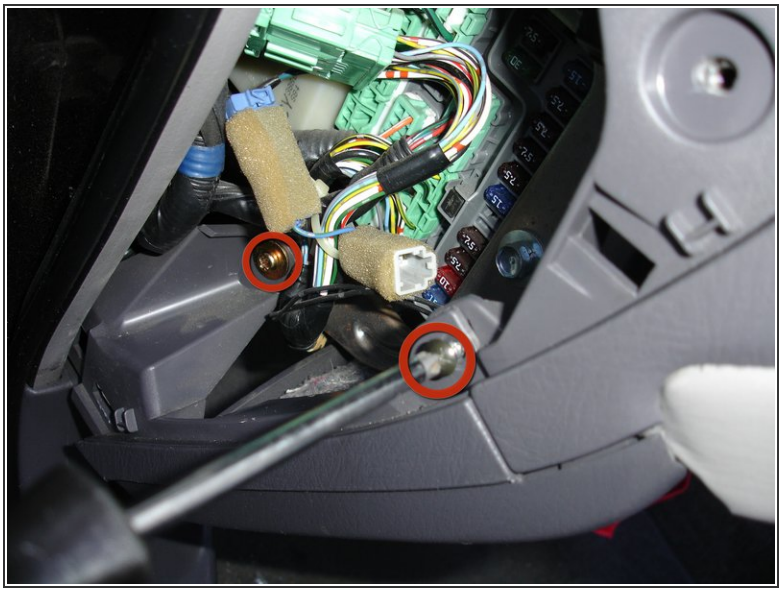
⚠ Do not touch any yellow wires under the dash -- they're for the airbag (or so I've heard).

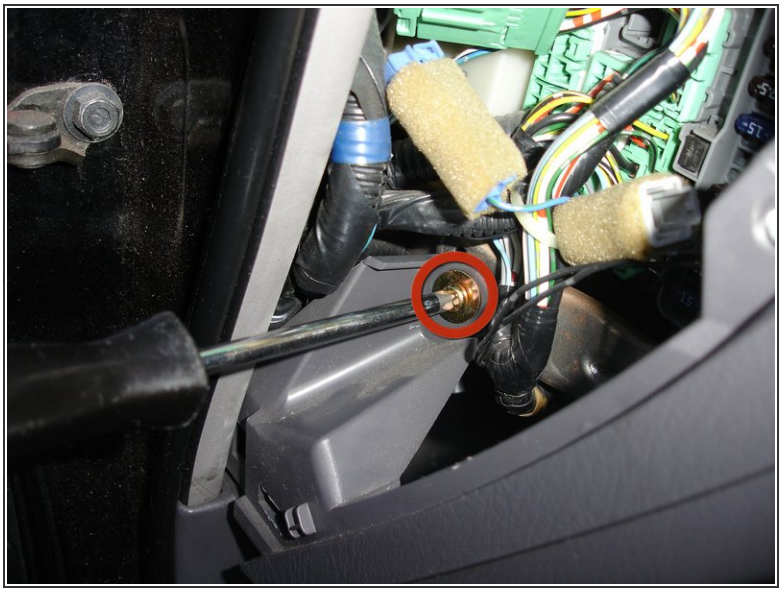
ⓘ As you can see, I keep my battery in tip-top shape. The grime acts as a blanket layer of protection against the elements.

Step 3

- Remove the driver's side fuse panel cover.

Step 4



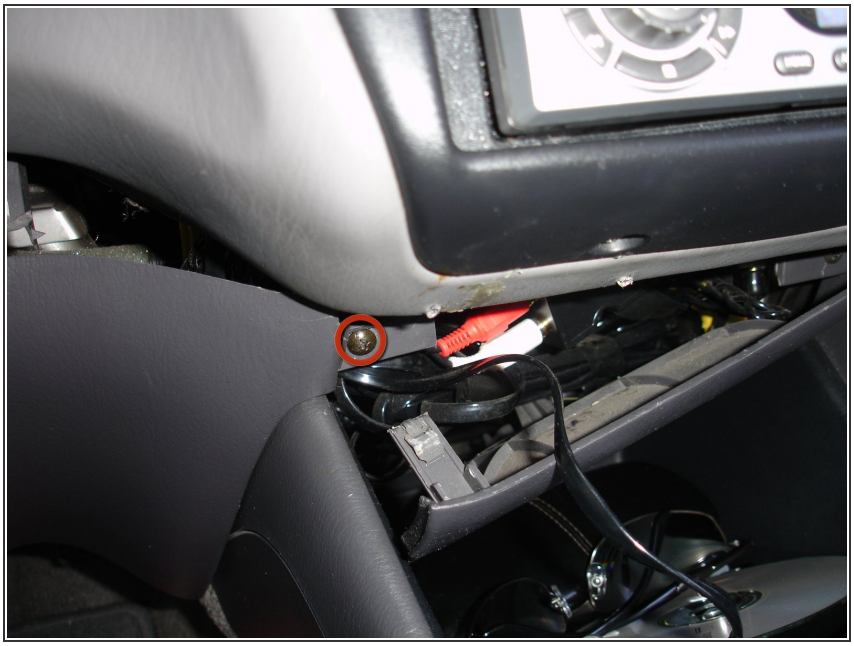


- Remove the two Phillips retaining screws that hold the driver's side lower panel to the dash.

Step 5

- Use a flathead screwdriver to pry off the left side of the panel immediately below the radio surround.

Step 6

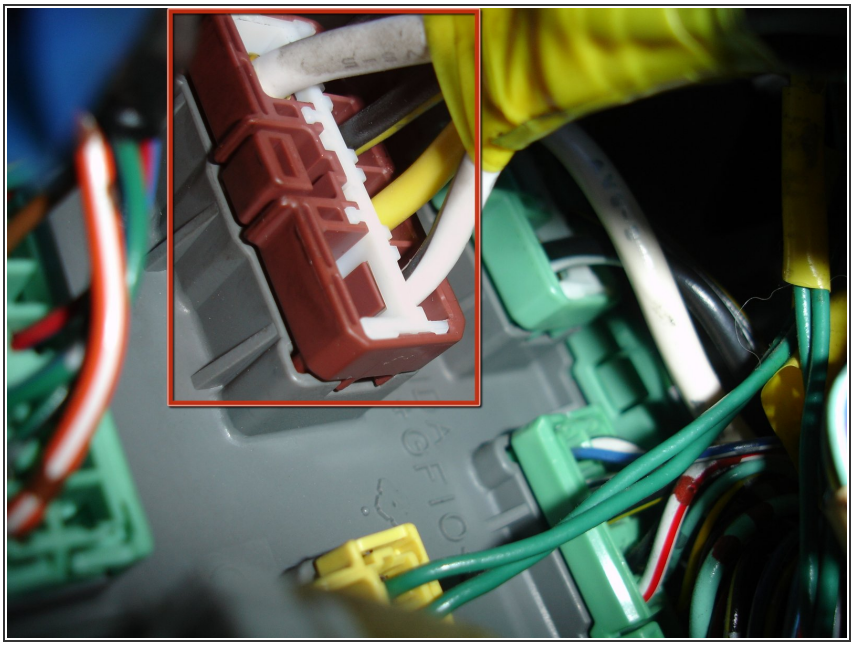


- Remove the last Phillips screw securing the right side of the driver's side lower panel.

Step 7

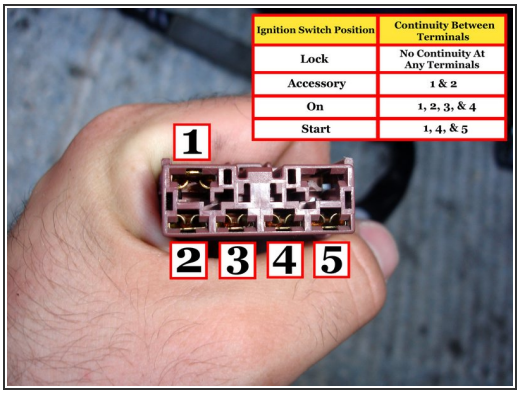
- Now the driver's side lower panel can be removed. Begin on the left side and gently pull it off, so that all of the retaining clips are released.

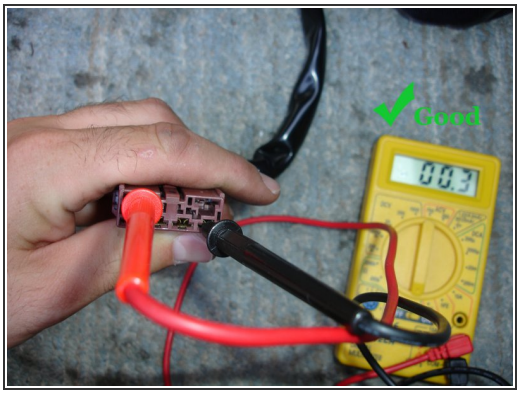
Step 8

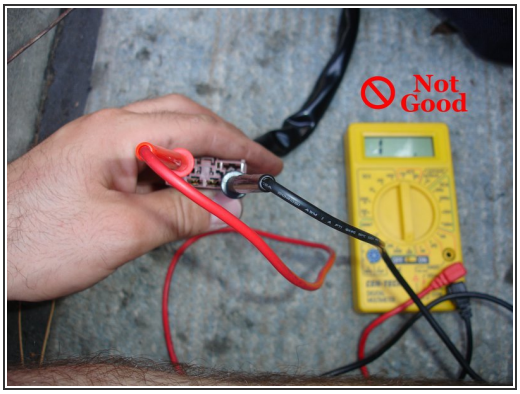


- The ignition switch can now be unplugged for testing. The switch connects to the rear of the driver's side fuse panel. Shine a flashlight and find the connector highlighted in red.

Step 9







Users are reporting a variation of the ignition switch positions on the pictured diagram that corresponds to these numbers:

- LOCK: All Open | ACC: 1 + 5 | ON: 1+3+4+5 | START 1+2+3

- Now it's testing time. The key should be placed into the ignition switch and turned to the appropriate position; you should test for continuity between each of the points as outlined in the guide.

I want to mention that this testing should be performed as thoroughly as possible, since the switch may appear to be fine at first. I got lucky in the sense that the switch immediately failed one of the tests. The best way to test the switch is to plug in the multimeter leads into the 1 and 4 terminals, and then to cycle between "On" and "Start." Eventually the multimeter should read "no continuity" in the "On" position, indicating that the switch is bad.

Step 10

Of course proceed at this point only if the switch failed one of the continuity tests. Also, make sure that the ignition switch is in the "Lock" position before proceeding any further.

- Lower the steering wheel adjustment lever all the way down.

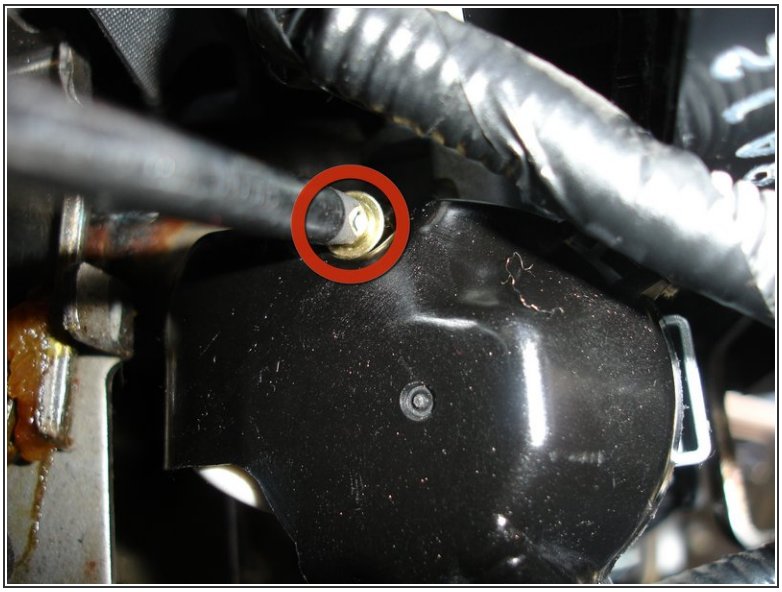
Step 11

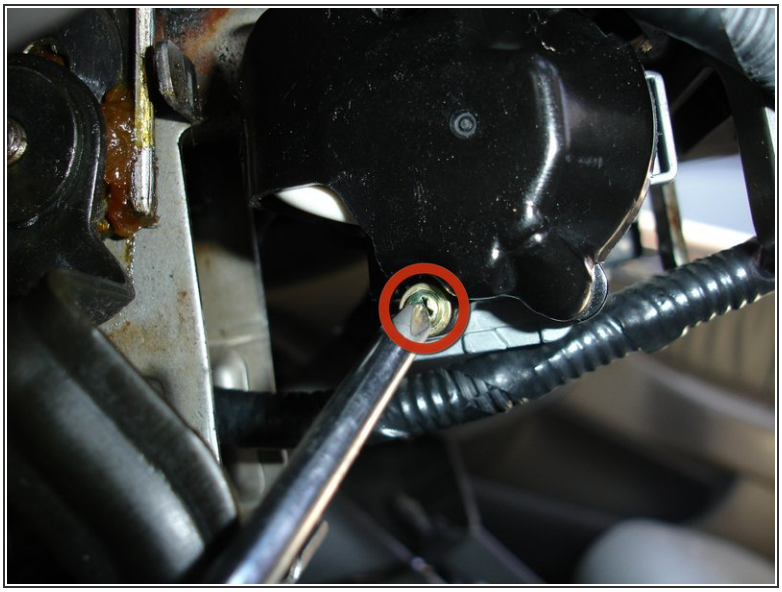
- Remove the three Phillips screws on the lower steering column cover.
- Pop the lower steering column cover off the top cover, giving you access to the electrical portion of the ignition switch.

Step 12

⚠ While in the general ignition switch area, make sure not to touch the steering column adjustment grease. I found it to be very greasy, as grease should be.

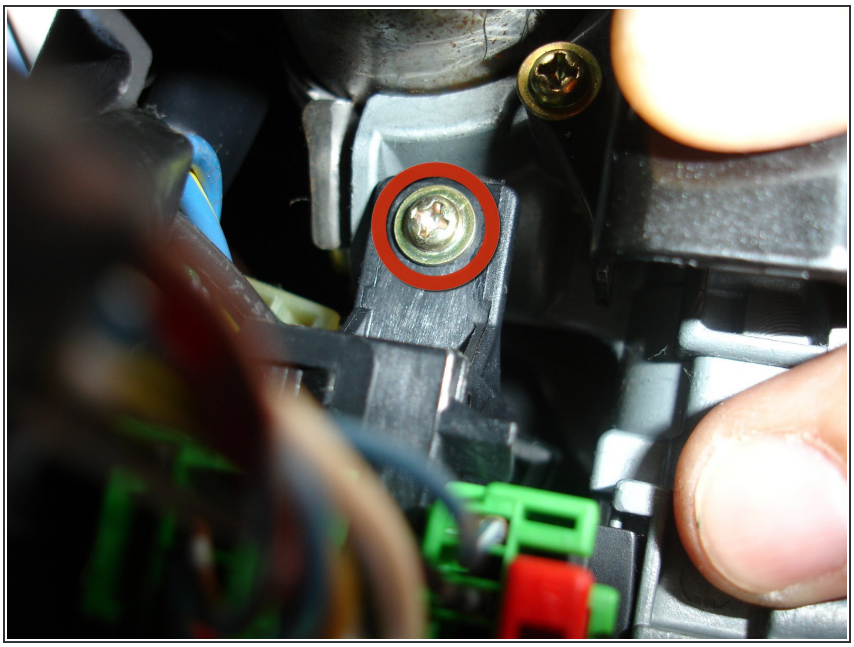
Step 13





- Unscrew the two Phillips screws that hold the ignition switch cover (and switch itself) in place.

Step 14

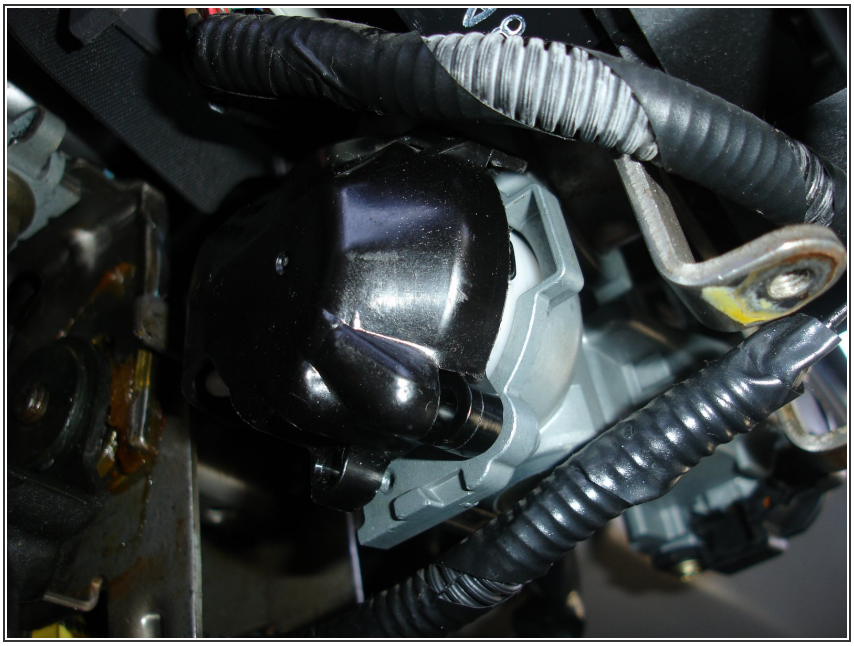


- The cover should be loose on the switch, however there is another screw holding it in place behind the steering wheel.

I found this screw by feeling around for it after realizing the cover was still held in place by something. It was not completely necessary to remove this screw to replace the switch, so I'll leave it up to you whether or not you want to remove it. The screw is in such a difficult place that I figured it would be harder to screw it back in place after removing it than just bending the ignition switch cover backwards and removing the switch.

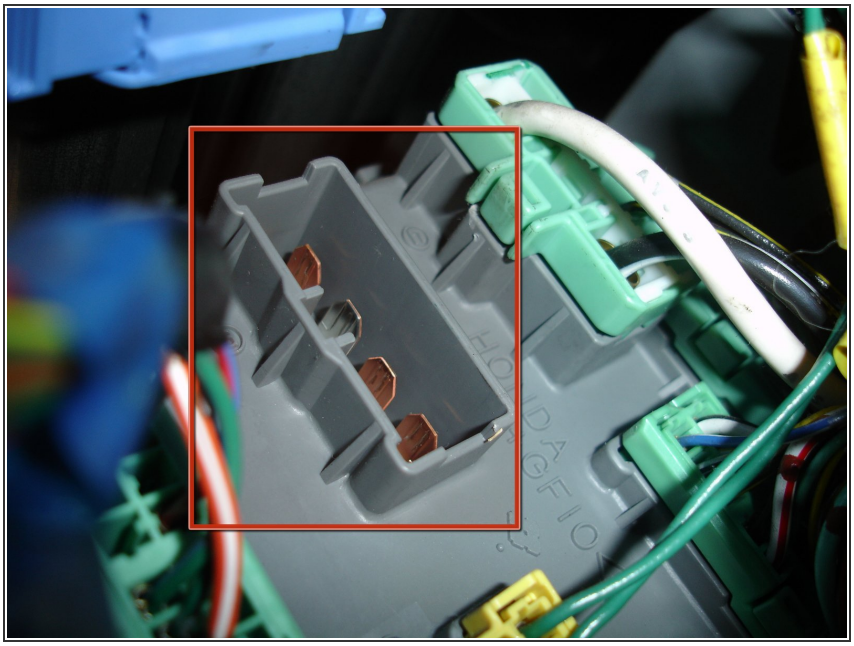
Other users have partially broken the cover since they did not fully remove the third screw. You've been warned.

Step 15



- Gently rotate the black cover aside and pull out the ignition switch.

Step 16



At this point you can test the new switch for continuity, just to make sure it's 100% functional before putting it into the car. Follow the same steps outlined in step #7 except use the flat blade screwdriver to switch between ignition positions. You'll notice that the switch clicks just like it does when you insert your key into the steering column ignition. If the continuity tests pass, you can proceed with installing it into your car.

- Once you remove the old switch from its cover, plug in the new switch connector into the rear of the fuse panel and connect the other side to the steering column.

Make sure that the new switch is in the "Lock" position. To make sure it is in the "Lock" position, use the flat blade screwdriver to gently twist the switch counter-clockwise until it will twist no more, ensuring that the switch is in the "Lock" position.

Step 17

- Route the wiring in the same manner the old switch wiring was routed, insert the switch into the steering column, and put back the ignition switch cover and screws.
- Use the electrical tape to corral any of the loose wiring. Put all paneling back the way it was by following the above directions in reverse. Make sure that the rubber O-ring around the ignition switch is properly seated against the switch when putting back the lower steering wheel cover.

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