

Center Console Installation

The topic name is a bit of a misnomer because this is mostly about how to get the console out, so a replacement can be installed...

The process took me about 4 hours - would have been 3 had I not been trying to get decent photos and had I not hit a wall with the arm rest hinge (more on that later). There are very good guides on the MACarbon WEB site that served as the basis for my installation:

http://www.macarbon.com/index.php?option=com_virtuemart&page=shop.browse&category_id=155&Itemid=94&lang=en

But, they don't tell you everything, so I took some notes and will add my experience to the process. This is for a PDK car, but the process is similar for a manual and is shown in the MACarbon guides.

Tools:

T-10, T-15, T-20, T25 Torx drivers.

Flat Screwdriver.

Plastic Trim Tools.

Painters Tape.

Ink Pen to label screws as they come out – I stuck them to painter's tape and labeled the tape – find a system that works and don't mix them up.

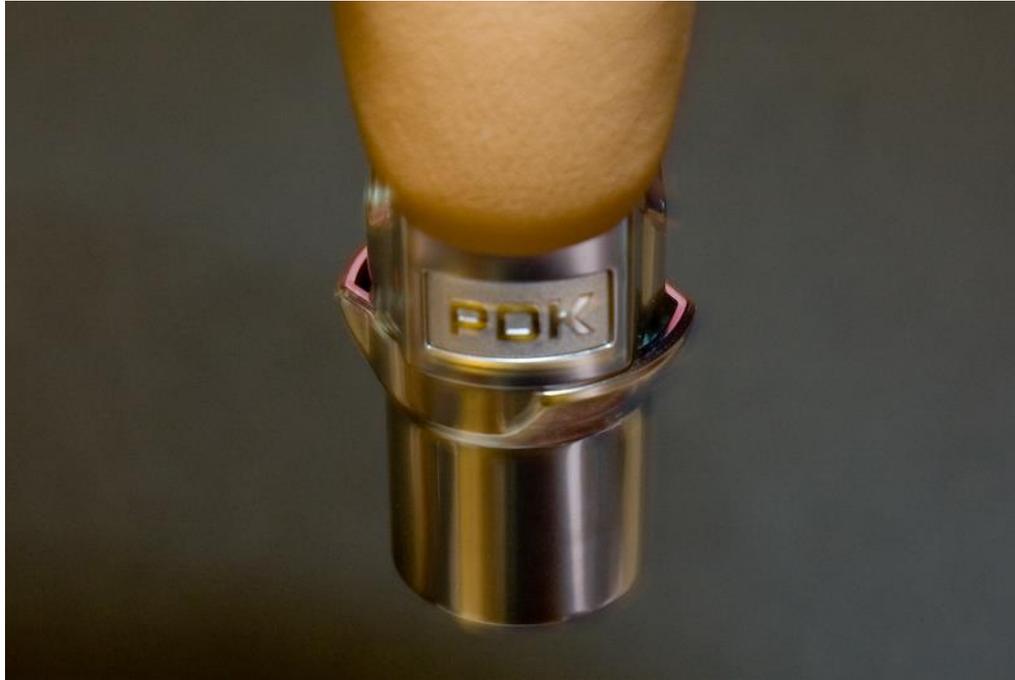
Camera to take additional photos for reference if you need them – a smart phone is handy for this.

The installation guides recommend disconnecting the battery and it is not a bad idea. Otherwise you can trigger the airbag warning and will need a trip to service to have it reset – I learned this the hard way once and was intent to avoid it this time. However, with a PDK car, being able to move the shift lever is almost essential to this installation and power is necessary to do that. So, once more, I decided to leave the battery connected.

Step 1 – put the shift lever in drive. This makes it easier to remove the knob and also makes getting the console and trim out possible.



Step 2 – remove the shift knob. There is a collar at the bottom of the knob that turns counter-clockwise (as shown in the photo) to release it from the shaft. MACarbon suggests putting painters tape over it to increase the grip and make it easier to turn – I didn't need to do that this time. Once turned, pull up firmly but gradually – you don't want it to suddenly release and jerk you into the PCM or the rear view mirror.



Step 3 – (Note: If your car has a Bose Subwoofer in the foot well then you'll need to reference the MACarbon guide for removing that.)

Use a T-25 Torx driver to remove the small carpeted panel in the foot well. The screw is hidden in the carpet pile – additionally, the screw does not come out of the panel. Slide the panel toward the front of the car to release it from the clips. Let it hang by the outlet wiring.

Repeat this for the Driver's side.



Step 4 – Using a T-20 Torx, remove the screws holding the side panels onto the center stack on both sides. These panels remain attached at the top, but can be pulled forward toward the shifter.



Step 5 – With the side panels loose, use a trim tool to gently pry up the console trim. There are clips at the rear, along the sides, and the front of the trim piece – pry straight up, not side to side!, and they will release. Take your time. Lift the shift trim up and out.



Now might be a good time to get the key out of the ignition to stop the chiming. I put the PDK knob back on loosely and put it in Park and removed the key. Then I carefully removed the knob again.

Step 6 – Using a T-20 Torx, remove 4 screws that secure the shift trim.



Step 7 – Using a T-20 Torx, remove a screw on each side of the storage bin. SLOWLY pull the storage bin out of the center stack; there is a tab at the top of it that clips in underneath the row of buttons above it – when I pulled mine out, the row of buttons came forward about ¼ inch and then I was able to disengage the tab and get it out – and push the row of buttons back into place.



Step 8 – The removed bin allows access to a T-20 Torx screw holding the center console to the car. Remove that screw.



Step 9 – Use a T-20 Torx to remove a screw on each side that holds the center console to the car in the foot well area.



Step 10 – Remove the rubber insert from the console storage bin.



Step 11 – Use a T-20 Torx to remove the screws in the storage compartment. If the iPod interface is installed (as shown below), there will be 3 long screws visible, 4 screws if no iPod interface.



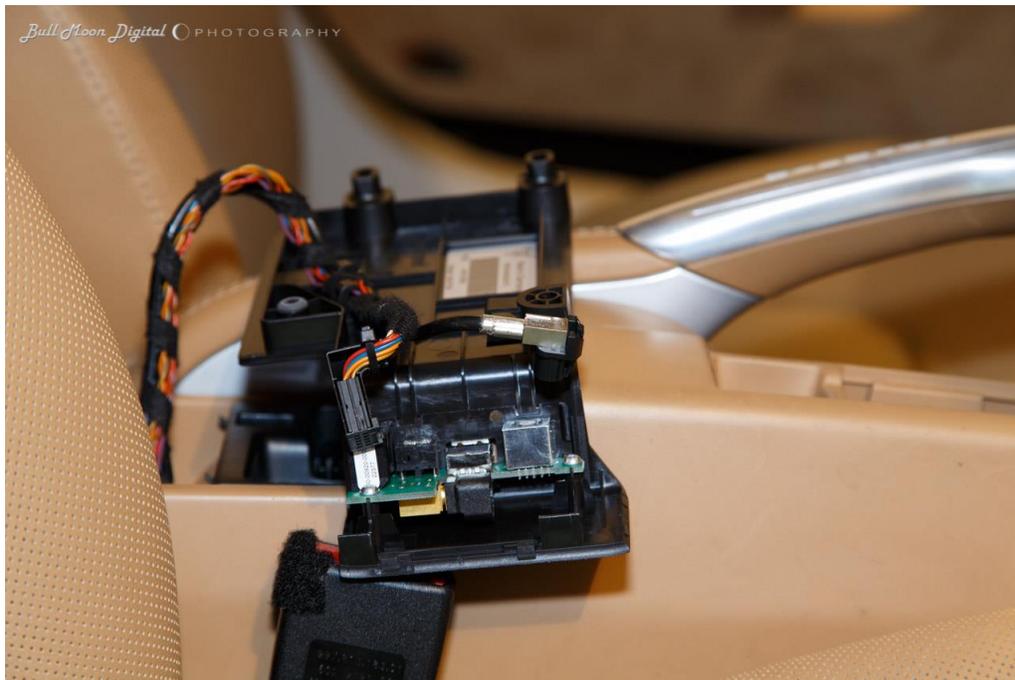
Step 12 – If installed, lift up the iPod adapter from the rear to remove it – this is not so easy to do and using a trim tool will help. Once out, the 4th short screw is visible – remove it and lift out the black “floor” plate.



Step 13 – There are two cables and plugs connecting the iPod interface. As seen below, the plug on the left is rectangular and plugs straight down – there is a release clip on it and unhandily located behind it, but it is not that hard to release. The plug on the right in the photo connects a coax cable and plugs into the interface with a 90-degree connector. It also has a small release clip on it. This plug pulls out to the side rather than up.



Both plugs shown disconnected. Remove the cables from the clips holding them to the iPod interface. The cables can be fed through the hole in the center console, later, when it is removed.



Step 14 – Use a trim to lift up and remove the “banana” from the beneath the hand brake.

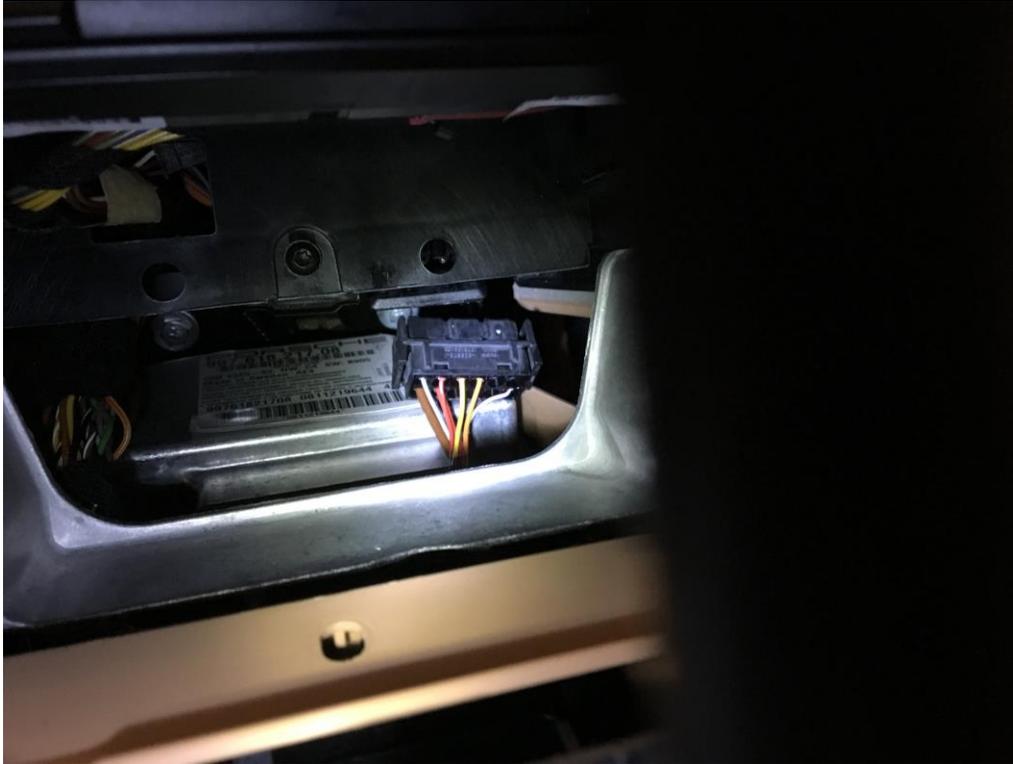


Remove the FINAL! T-20 Screw holding the Center Console in. Be careful not to drop it into the console when re-installing it!!!



Step 15 – Back to the console stack where the front bin was removed and on the passenger foot well side, there is a plug that connects the center console wiring. There are release clips on each side where the wires come out that need to be pushed in slightly. They also need to be pressed in when replacing the plug later. Either reach under the console stack or around from the foot well and remove this plug.

DO NOT put the key in the ignition and turn on the power in the car while this plug is out – it will cause an airbag fault and you'll need service to clear the instrument cluster warning.



The Center Console is now disconnected from the car. Cover the hand brake with painter's tape before removing the console to avoid scratching it. Carefully lift the center console back and out from the rear and slide it up onto the folded down rear seat shelves AND, if necessary, feed the iPod interface cables through the hole. Carefully lift the center console out of the car. Place the center console on a work area, perhaps on top of a beach towel.

Now get ready for the hard part...say what?

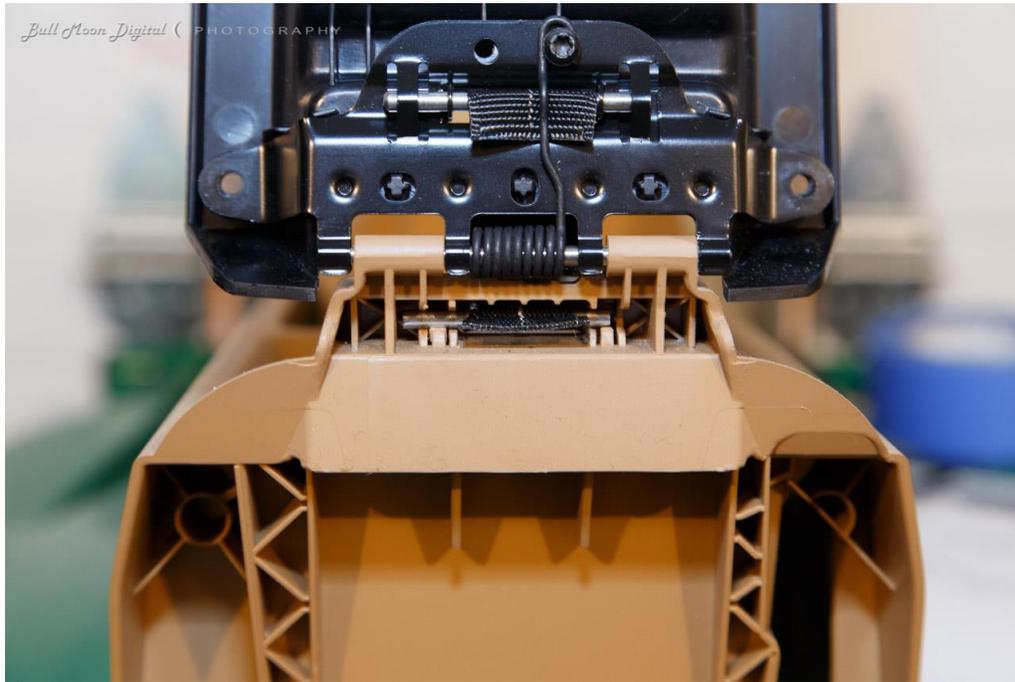
Step 16 – Use a T-10 Torx to remove 8 screws securing the arm rest pad to the center storage bin lid. Set the arm rest pad aside.



Step 17 – With the center console turned over, use a T-20 Torx to remove 2 screws that attach the rear storage bin to the center console. Lift the bin up to separate it from the console. This will give easier access to removing the center storage area lid. And you'll need all the advantages you can muster.

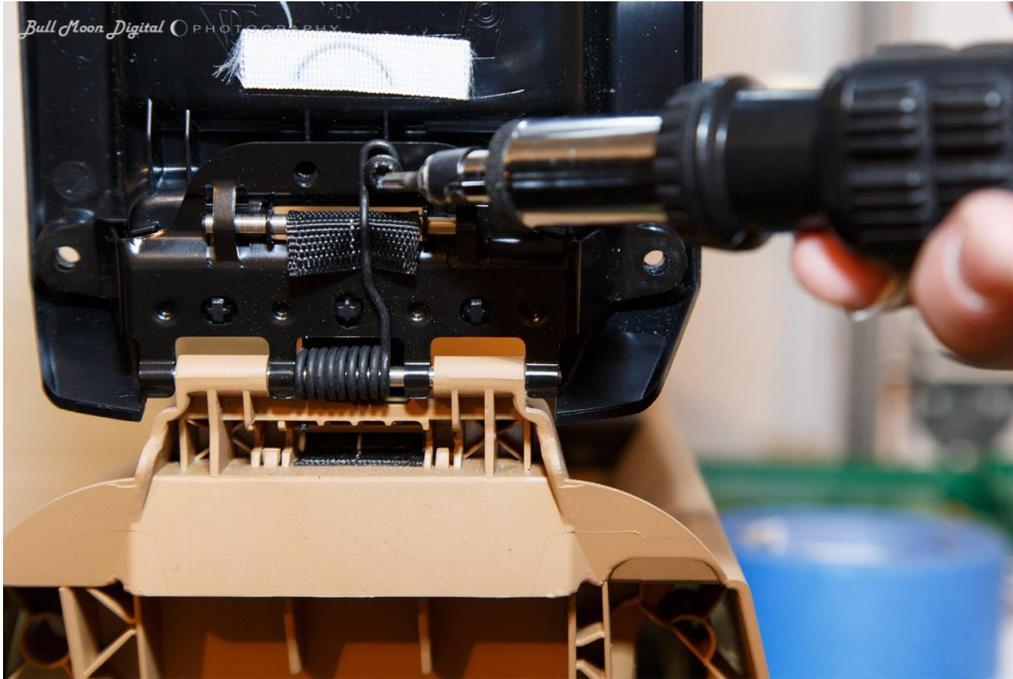


Step 18 – View from the back of the center console with rear bin removed and lid raised. This is how things should look when you put all the parts back together later. Now, let's take it apart so we can transfer the lid and spring hinge mechanism to the replacement center console.

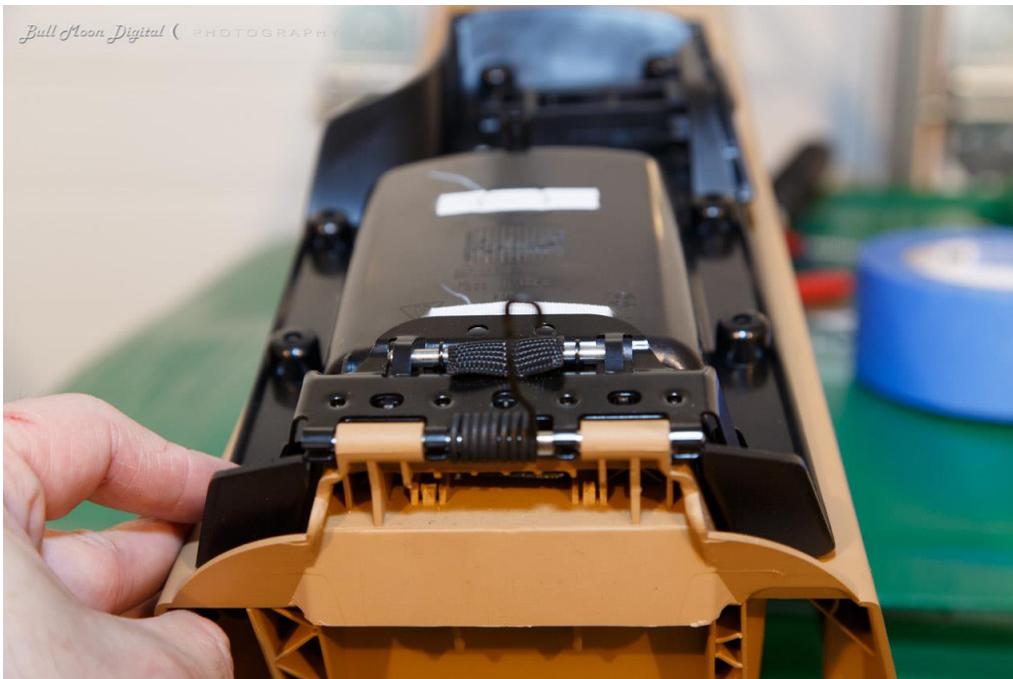


At this point, you can use a flat head screw driver from the other side to push out the round horizontal bar, holding the “catch strap”, clipped into the plastic clips in the center console. Or you can wait until the spring is loose, which might be easier.

Step 19 – Use a T-20 Torx to remove the Spring retaining screw which also holds the lid to the hinge, so hold onto the lid as it all comes apart with the screw out.



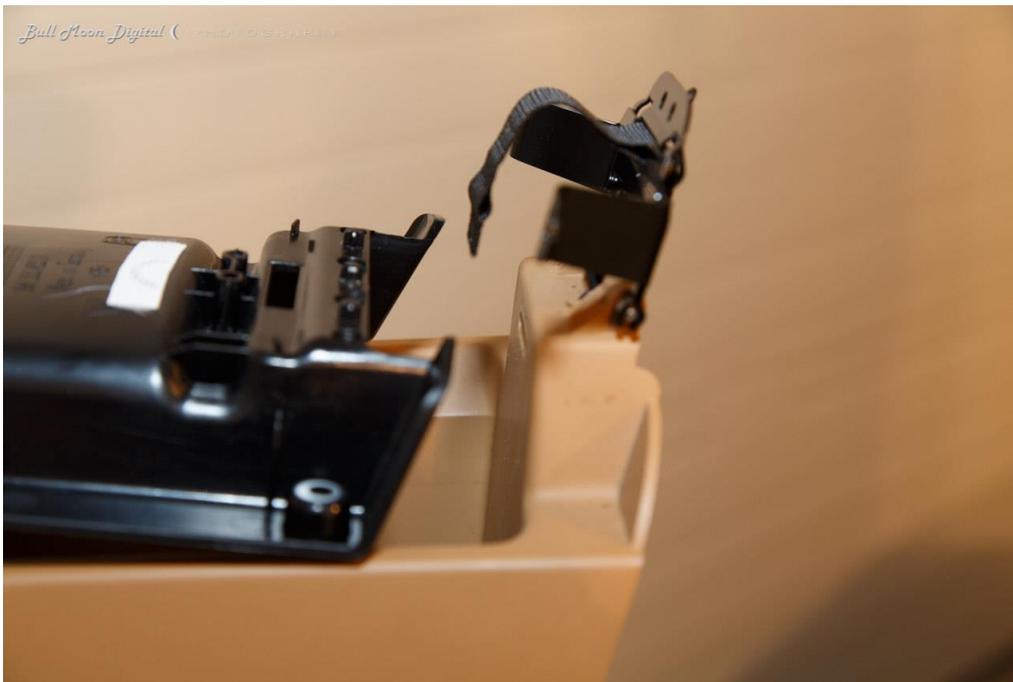
Screw removed, lid and hinge resting in “closed position”.



Side view of assembly with screw removed.

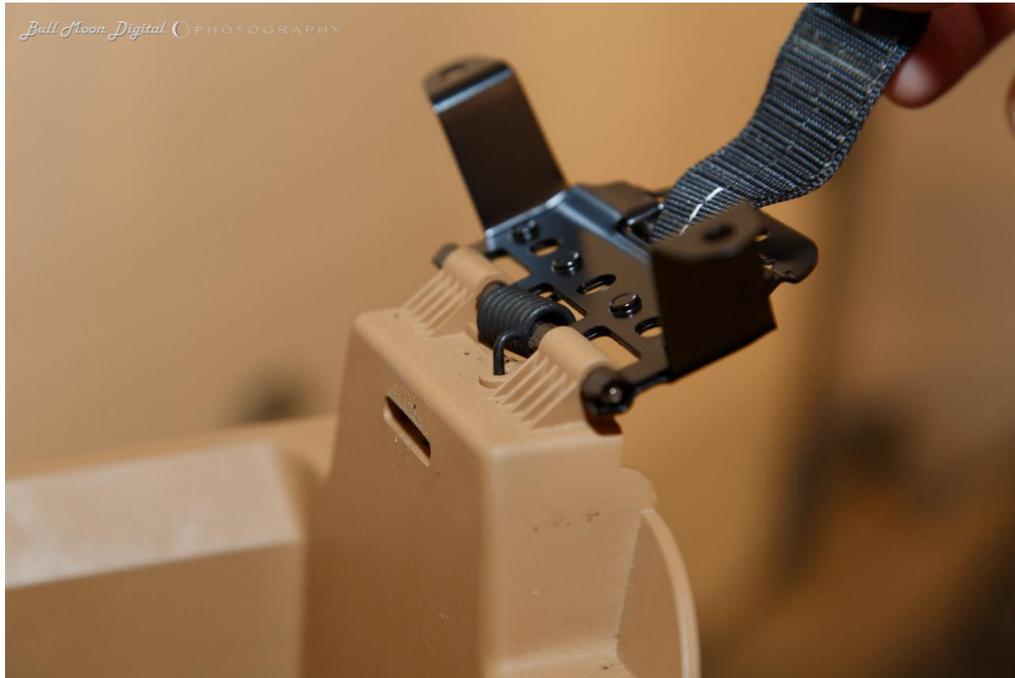


Step 20 – Lift up the hinge and the catch strap comes out of the lid – set the lid aside.

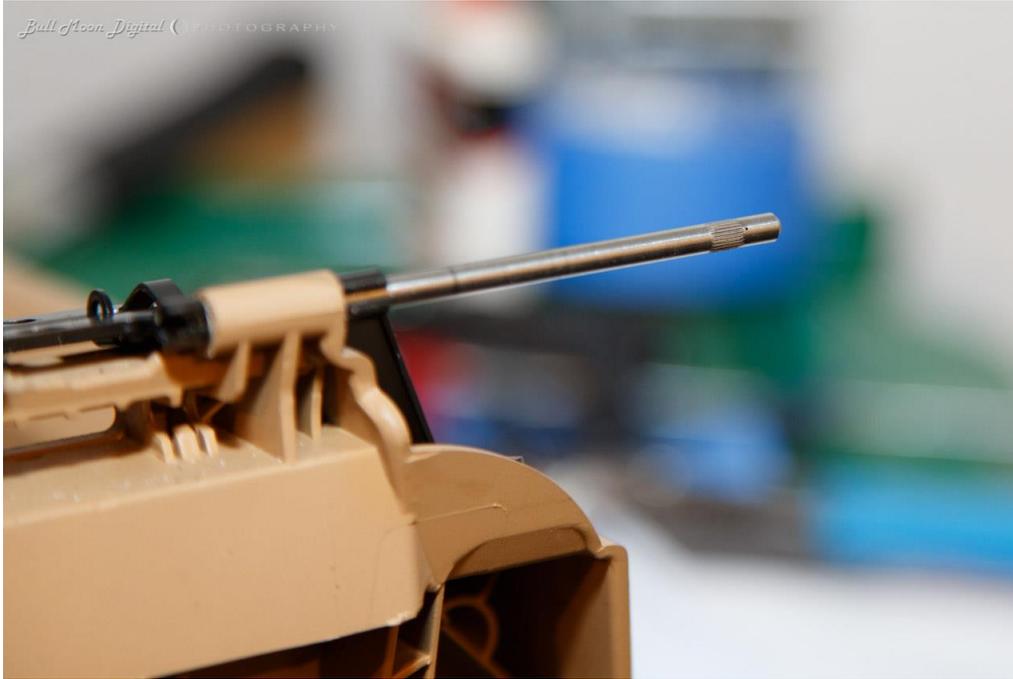


Step 21 – Remove the 2nd strap bar and strap from the hinge – they'll fall out anyway with no tension to hold them together.

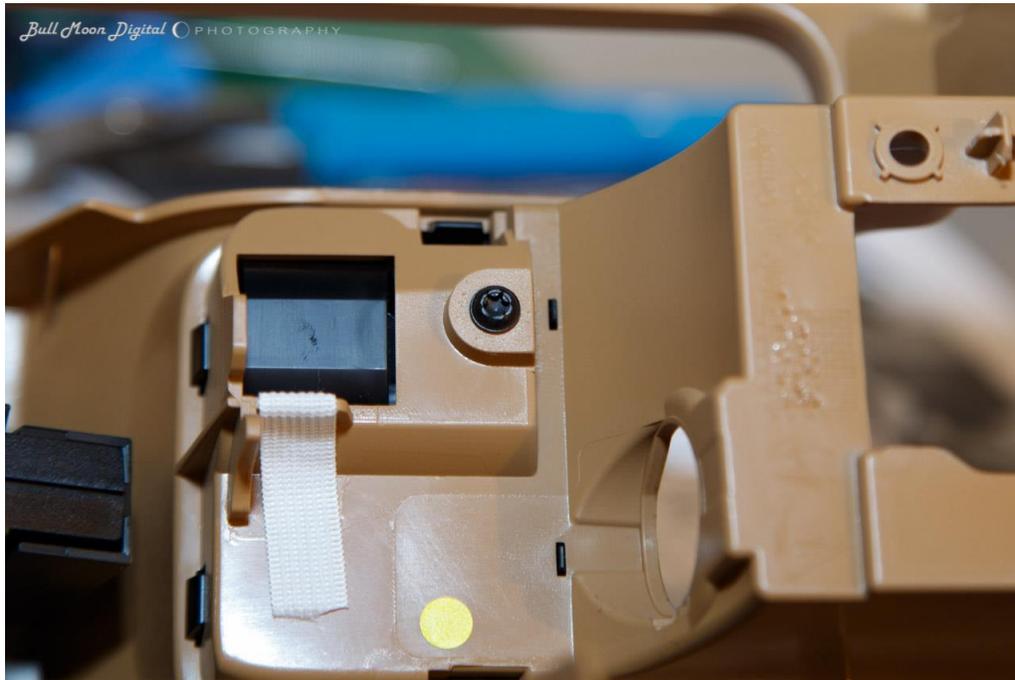
Note the position of the spring and the hole that retains it into position in the center console. Reference this for reassembly later. Pay particular attention to how all these parts including the strap and retaining bars fit together – take your own photos to help show how to reassemble.



Step 22 – The hinge mechanism must be removed from the center console. I found the hinge pin extremely difficult to remove – perhaps because I didn't know it had a knurled end to keep it in place (seen in the photo) and which direction to push it. On my console, the correct guess would have been to push left to right as viewed from the rear of the console. Even then it was very tight. I finally used a nail and hammer to help push/knock it through and a very small amount of 3-n-1 oil into the clamps on the hinge. This took me a long time to sort out! Patience and care. OK, that was a bitch – hard part over!

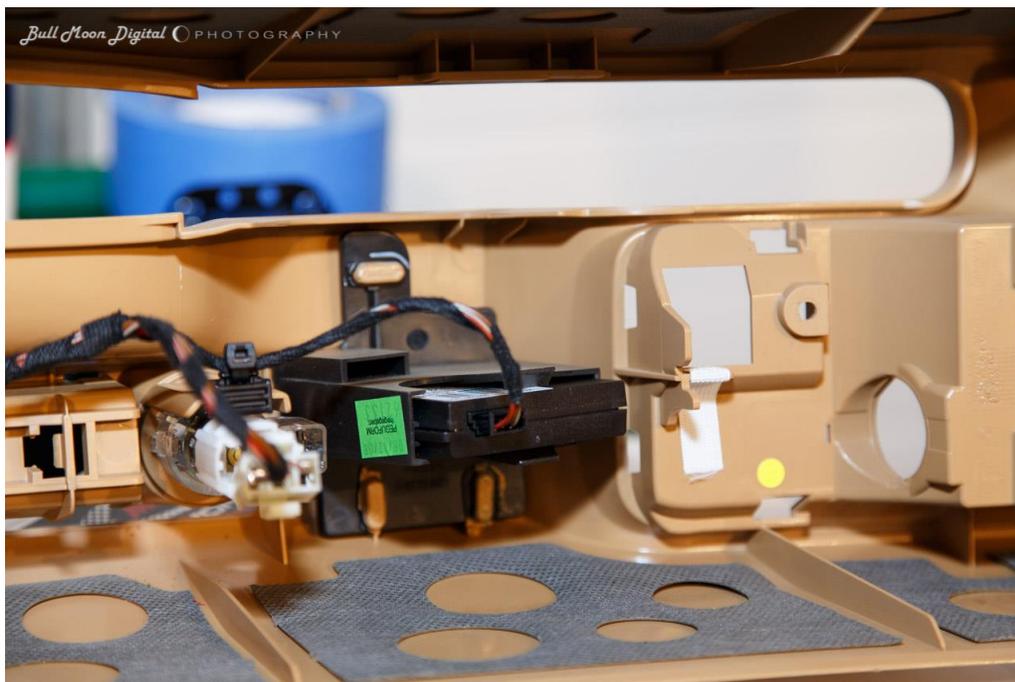


Step 23 – The coin tray needs to be removed from the center console to be re-used in the new center console. Turn the console over. There is a T-20 Torx screw that has to come out and then four tenacious clips – use a trim tool to help push them out.

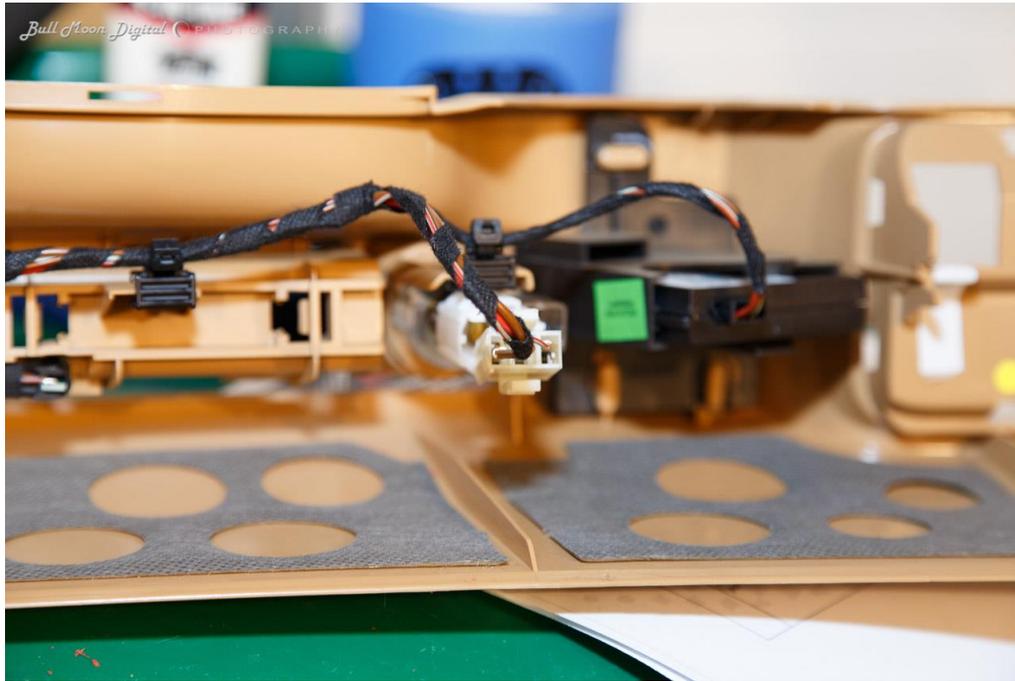


Step 24 – With the console turned over, disengage all the plugs and clips so the center console wiring can be removed. The following photos detail the plugs and wire clips.

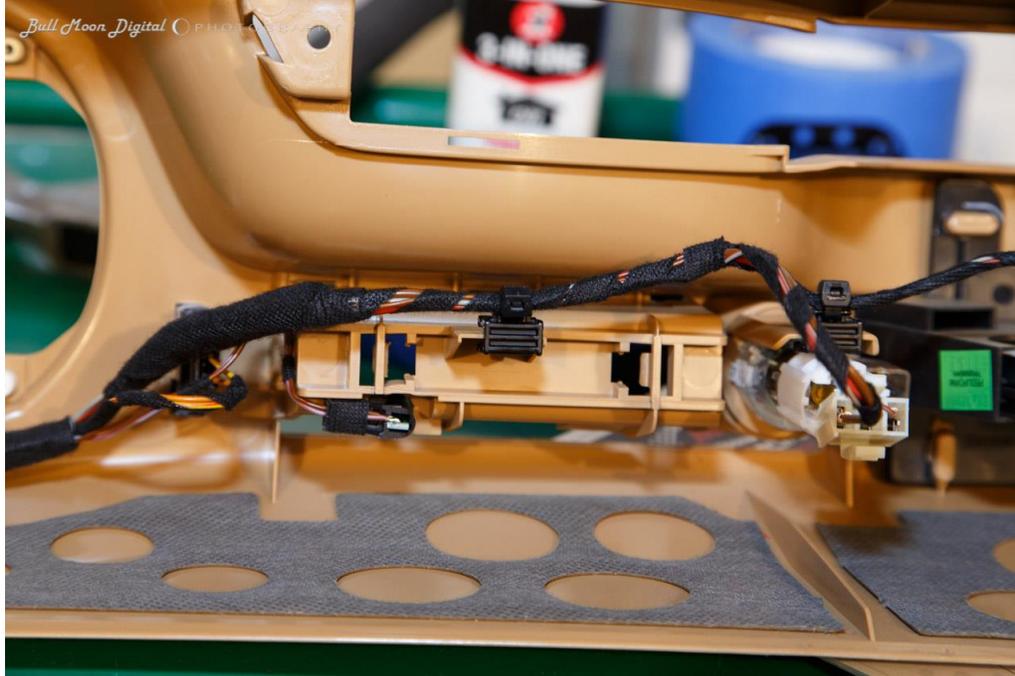
Large black square plug:



Cigarette lighter plug:



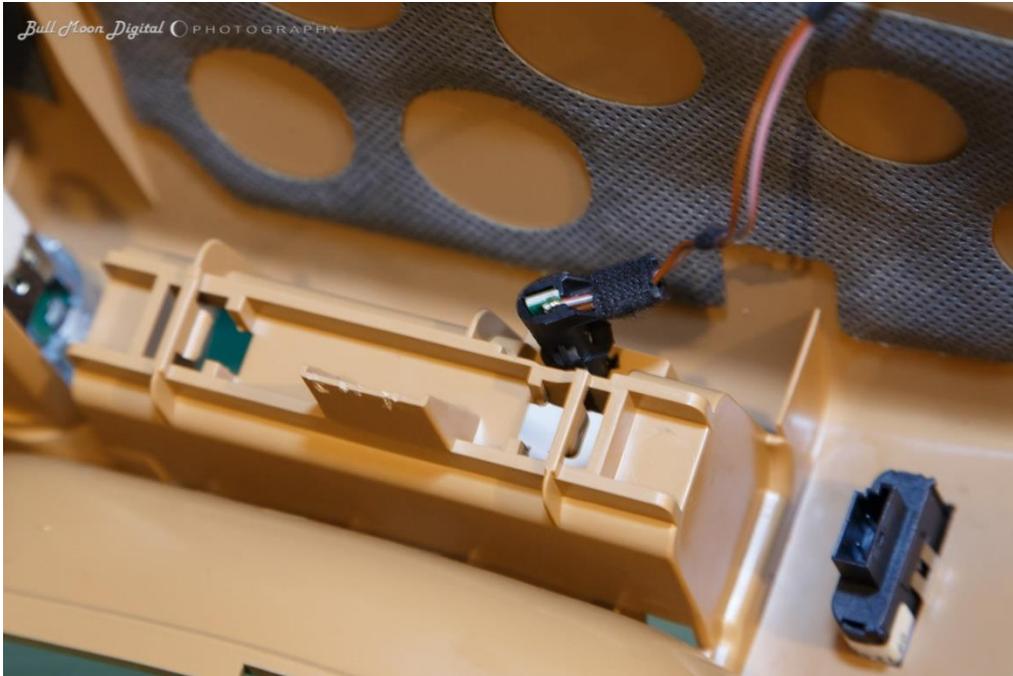
Wire clip – rock from side to side while pulling up to get it loose – it has metal teeth biting into the console plastic.



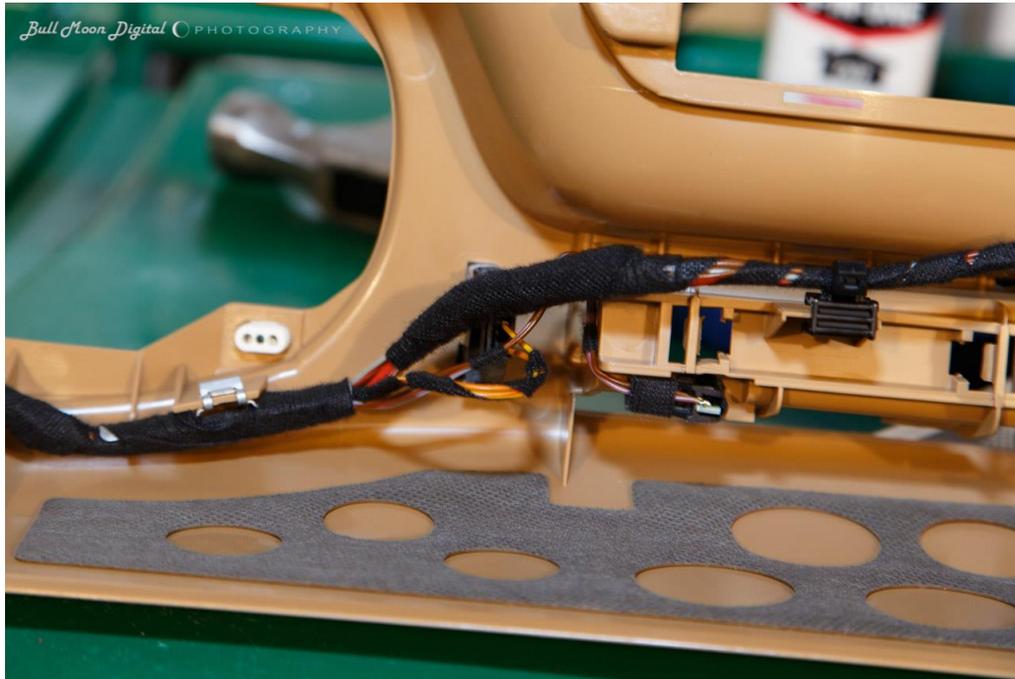
Ashtray light plug:



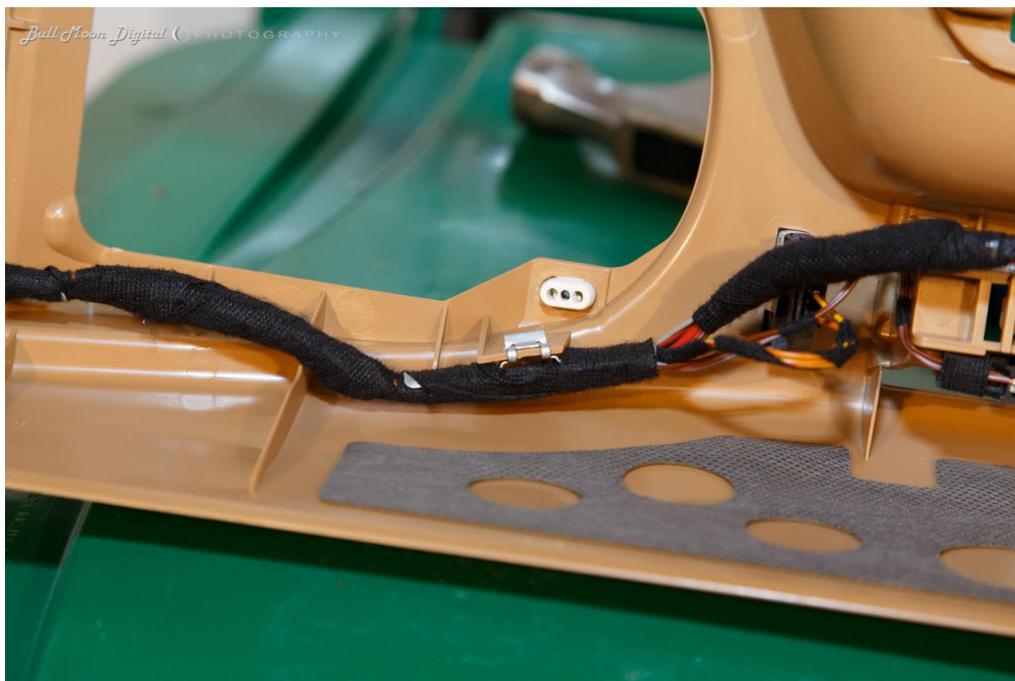
Rotate the ashtray light counter-clockwise about $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to lift it out. Two small clips protruding from the sides will line up with holes in the console and it will lift out.



Airbag indicator plug (under the wiring):



Another retaining clip with metal teeth.



Final retaining clamp with metal teeth.



Step 25 – remove the Airbag indicator light – push it up out of the top of the center console – the metal clips on it barely hold it in.



Voila! The console is removed and disassembled – time for a short break.



Step 26 – Reassembly and installation.

For the most part, reverse the steps above transferring parts to the new center console.

Install the console wiring, the center storage lid and hinge mechanism, coin tray, and rear storage bin.

The center console is ready to be installed into the car.

Step 27 – Use painter’s tape to protect the front protruding areas of the center console so that they will not be scratched when installing around the shift area and center stack.

Step 28 – Back the center console into the area between the seats and up onto the folded rear seat shelves, then move it forward and thread the iPod interface cables up through the hole.

Step 29 – Thread the console wiring plug up under the console stack and back toward the receptacle at the passenger side foot well.

Step 30 – Ease the center console forward into place and check that all the screw holes line up.

Step 31 – Plug the console wiring back into the plug up front – make sure it is securely plugged in. Plug the connectors into the iPod interface.

Step 32 – If you have disconnected the battery, reconnect it now. If not – you are brave or cocky, but if you were careful, when you turn the key to power up the car, you won’t get an airbag light!

Test to make sure the two lighter plugs in the console and foot well work, check the ashtray light, and make sure the iPod interface works.

Step 33 – If all the electrical checks out, work back through the remaining installation items in the reverse order that they were disassembled. Feel free to power up and move the shift lever to where ever you need it to be to make reassembly easier.

Congratulations.