

• Seatback Pocket Repair

Model & year: **95-01 7-Series, U.S.**

Expertise level: **Beginner > Intermediate > Advanced**

Date: **March, 2015** (Updated: March 10, 2017)

Estimated time to complete: **4-6 hours**

Tools Required

- 10mm driver
- Hand drill
- Power stapler with short staples
- Misc hand tools
- Bentley or Haynes manual (optional)

Facilities Needed

- Workbench

Parts Required



- ABS Plastic Cement
- 40+ lb Fishing Line
- 2.5" - 3.5" Extension Springs
- (2) Small Screws

Getting Started

The rear seats of most '95-'01 BMW 7-Series are home to a real eyesore: failed seatback pockets. These spring-loaded pockets (or map pockets) were made from under-engineered plastic parts resulting in broken hinges or hangers or both, sometimes complemented by cracked frames.

The cause of these failures is the spring load on the hinges.

The spring force is simply too strong for the wimpy plastic parts, resulting in cracks and eventual failure. Since BMW doesn't sell replacement parts (requiring instead a complete new seatback for \$300, each) it's not uncommon to see many 7-Series cars with drooping pockets.

Fortunately these pockets can be repaired. But simply re-attaching the broken plastic with glue won't work! So, don't be tempted to try. Even reinforcing the plastic with a screw isn't enough, ask me how I know. Reattaching the spring will cause the repaired joint to fail almost immediately. Again, ask me how I know.

There simply isn't a repair strong enough to hold the plastic hinge against the spring load.

That's why the only effective DIY solution is to move the spring load off the hinges, leaving the repaired hinges to serve as hinges only. The spring force can be moved to an improvised direct-pull type as seen in the final DIY step below.

Credit for the alternate spring set-up goes to *dville* of BimmerForums, seen here:

- [Solution for loose front seat map pocket](#)

My instructions combine plastic repair along with *dville*'s spring mechanism.

Since the factory parts are made with ABS plastic, use an ABS cement, which can be found in the plumbing section of any home supply store (such as Lowe's or Home Depot).

The resulting modifications are barely visible to rear seat passengers. Having repaired one pocket in this manner, you may wish to do the same to the other for a consistent feel to each pocket.

Procedure

Pocket Removal and Repair

1) Position front upper seatback forward, then recline the whole seatback forward.

2) Remove seatback panels.

This is possibly the most difficult part of the procedure. In my experience, there's no method which works every time. Generally speaking, remove the upper seatback panel first by pulling downward while pulling the bottom outward.

Next, grab the bottom of the lower seatback panel (somewhere) and pull out while shifting the whole thing back and forth. It may take several attempts of pulling and shifting but it should eventually release its bottom clips. Then lift the panel off its upper hangers.

3) Move lower panel to workbench. Remove the seatback pocket from the panel by unscrewing the 10mm black plastic retaining nuts. Detach the hinge springs (these will *not* be re-used!) then unclip the bottom flap material and remove pocket. The removed pocket should look like:



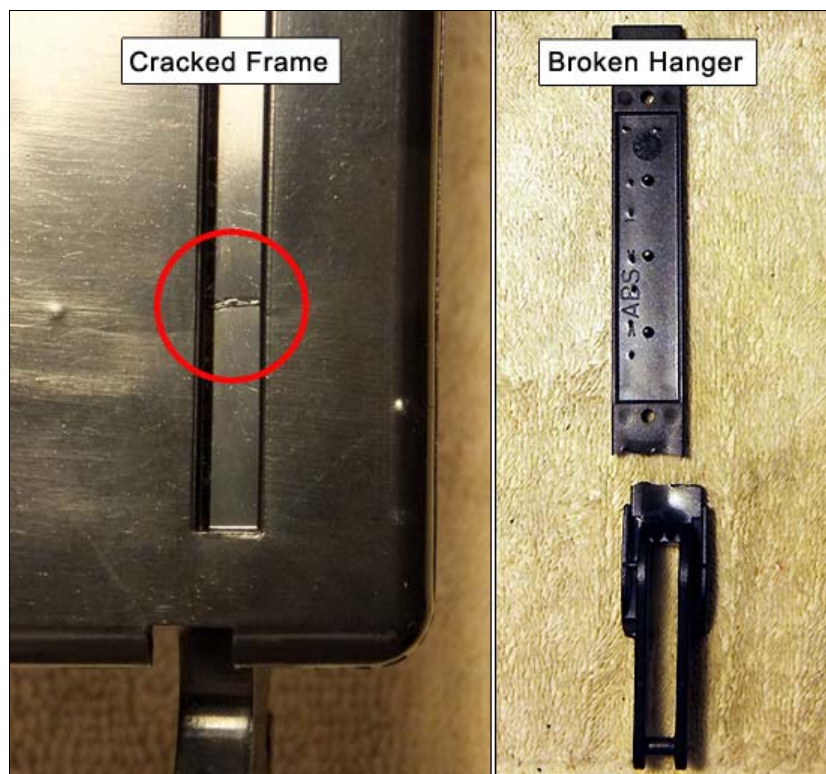
4) Inspect pocket for broken parts. Some will be obvious, such as a broken hinge. Other damage may be hidden:

Using a small screwdriver or other suitable tool, move pocket material out of the way while inspecting the frame area around the hinge for cracks. Gently press on hinge while looking for frame movement. If a crack is found, it will be necessary to

completely (or partially) remove frame from pocket material in order to repair, as seen in image below:

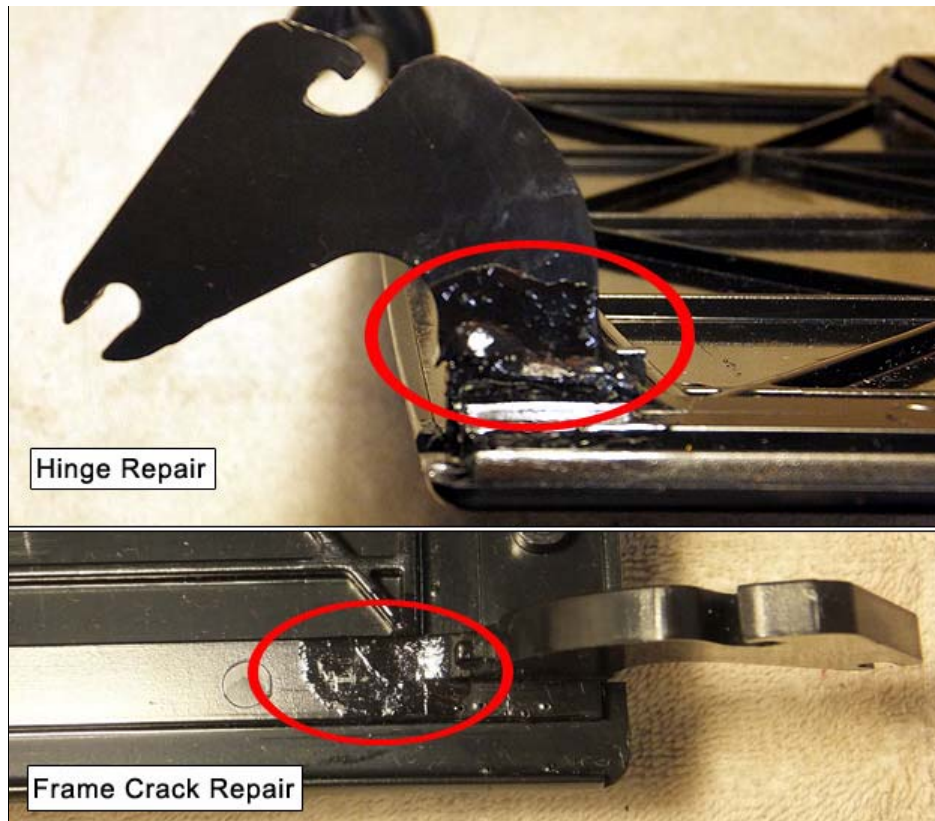


Remove the staples holding the leather flaps to the plastic hangers. Unfold and remove the flaps to reveal the hanger. Inspect for cracks. Separate hanger from hinge by pulling apart. Set aside broken parts for glue repair.



With hangers removed from hinges, it's possible to remove the frame from pocket material for crack repair, if needed.

5) Using ABS plastic cement, glue broken parts back together and allow them to set-up overnight. See images below:



6) Insert repaired frame into pocket material (if removed) but do not install hangers yet.

Spring Assembly

These instructions are mostly identical to *dville's* of BimmerForums. Moving the spring load off the hinges is the key to a long-lasting repair!

1) Pre-drill a small hole in an upward direction, close to the outer edge on the inside of the pocket, inline with the hangers and nested below the grip area. Turn in a short but stout screw on each side, as illustrated below:



These will serve as anchor points for the fishing line. Be careful not to entangle too much of the white frame padding material in your drill bit so, use a low rpm when drilling.

2) While holding the hangers in place on the seatback panel, drill a small hole thru the upper center of the hangers and also thru the seatback panel, as illustrated below:



De-burr the hole in the plastic hanger to ensure smooth surfaces thru which the fishing line can move.

3) Re-assemble the complete pocket, first snapping the hangers back into the hinges and then fold and staple the leather flaps on each hangar. Use a punch tool to poke a hole in the leather flap, matching the drilled hole in the plastic hangar.

4) Cut off a 4 foot length of fishing line. Loop and tie the center portion of the line securely to the pocket anchor points (screws), leaving two lines (each about 2 feet long) returning from each anchor. Use the heaviest gauge fishing line you can find (40 lb minimum).

5) Thread the dual fishing lines through each hole in the pocket hangars, and then through the seatback panel holes. Carefully pull the fishing line through as the pocket is moved into position on the seatback panel. See image:



Be sure the line doesn't become entangled behind the hangers and that the bottom flap material is also positioned correctly so that the aluminum tabs poke thru the panel slots.

Fasten the 10mm nuts onto the hanger bolts but leave the top nuts loose. Pull and fold over the aluminum tabs securing the pocket's bottom flap material using needle-nose pliers, for a tight fit.

Verify the fishing line's freedom of movement by cycling the pocket open and closed. Be sure the line clears the top of

the hangar flaps by adjusting the anchor screw as needed.

6) Now for the final but most important part: loop the fishing line thru each end of a 2.5" extension spring and then around the top nut post, as shown below:



With the pocket closed and the spring slightly tensioned, tighten both nuts thereby holding the line in place. Test the action of movement by opening/closing the pocket. Adjust spring tension as desired.

Re-install seatback panels and....you're done!

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