

# Steptronic Shift Pattern Reversal

Model & year: **96-97 8-Series, U.S.**

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

Date: **July 25, 2008**

Estimated time to complete: **2-3 hours**

## Tools Required

- wire cutters
- heat-shrink tubing

## Facilities Needed

- None

## Parts Required

- None

## Getting Started

I love my steptronic transmission. For me it blends the best of both worlds: the sportiness of a manual with the everyday convenience of an automatic. My only gripe was the counter-intuitive manual shift directions - forward to upshift, back to downshift. Most prefer to upshift in the direction of acceleration forces (back) and downshift with deceleration forces (forward).

Beginning in 2002, BMW relented to criticism and reversed the shift directions in all steptronic cars. Fortunately for those of us with pre-'02 models, we can have the same with a simple cut-n-splice wiring procedure!

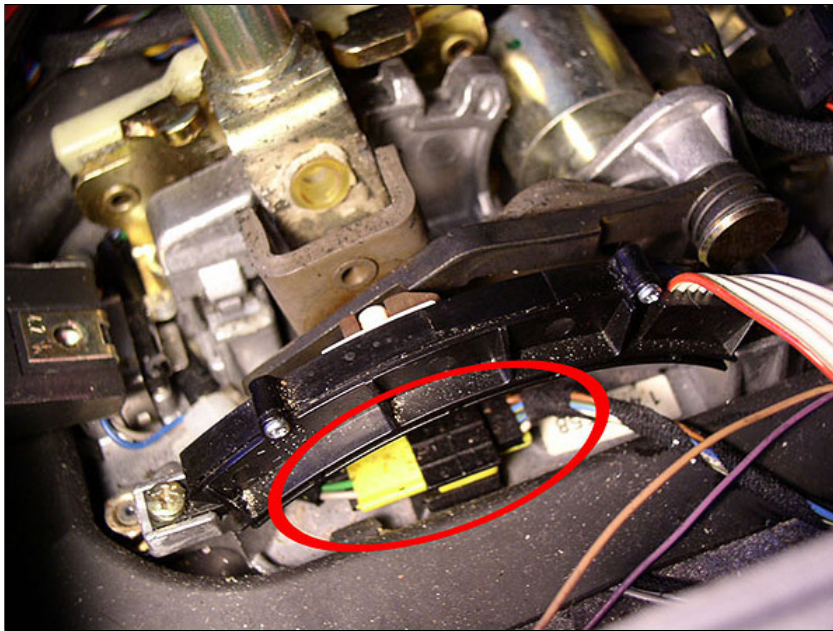
This *reversible* procedure was first noted at [www.bmwtips.com](http://www.bmwtips.com) in January of 2002 for 5-series owners. Even though the procedure below is written specifically for the 8-series, both write-ups generally apply to all pre-'02 BMW's. A minor remaining issue for 8 owners however is the shift symbols displayed on the shift cover (+/-). You may be able to adapt a cover from another '02-on BMW but, for me, it's a non-issue since few notice these symbols anyway.

## Procedure

1) Remove the main console trim:

- a) Remove gear shift handle by pulling up (hard).
- b) Remove shift surround boot using a small screwdriver for prying it up and off.
- c) Release retaining screws for shift cover (2).
- d) Remove all center console switches by pushing up and out. Unplug and set aside.
- e) Remove radio.
- f) Remove the OBC by pushing out from behind.
- g) Release console retaining screws behind and above open OBC area.
- h) Pull console trim back and up. Unplug climate control module and phone mic grille.

2) Locate yellow steptronic shift connector on lower right side of shifter. Unplug. See image below:

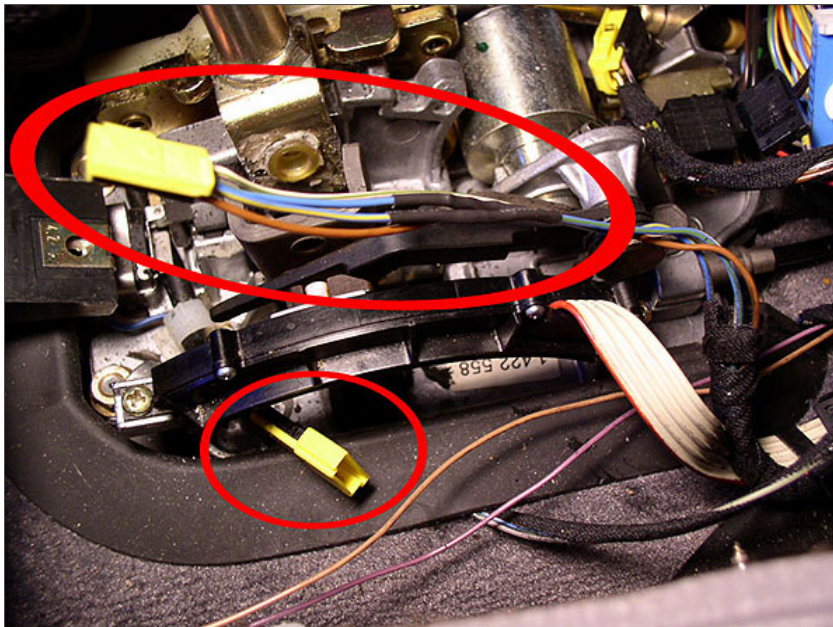


3) The source connector has four wires:

- pin 4 - white/green (manual mode)
- pin 3 - blue/beige (upshift)
- pin 2 - blue/green (downshift)
- pin 1 - brown/black (ground)

The blue/beige wire (pin 3) and blue/green wire (pin 2) need to be reversed.

4) Locate an accessible section a few inches from the connector with enough slack for splicing. Using wire cutters, snip the two wires. Splice using heat shrink tubing (electrical tape tends to deteriorate). See image below.



5) Console re-installation is reverse of removal. Enjoy!

Frankie  
Austin, Texas, USA  
[www.frankies-bmw.com](http://www.frankies-bmw.com)