

The original reason for changing out the ignition switch was due to a chronic dead battery issue. When it got colder than 30 (F) degrees, the vehicle's battery went dead several mornings when we tried starting. After reading multiple posts on this site, as well as [bimmer.roadfly.com \(http://forums.roadfly.com/forums/bmw/bmw-x5-e53/8554332-1.html\)](http://forums.roadfly.com/forums/bmw/bmw-x5-e53/8554332-1.html) I came to the conclusion that the chronic dead battery issue with my 2002 X5 was probably due to a bad ignition switch. Some other issues I had were specific to the dashboard in that none of the gauges were working (except speedometer) and the temperature gauge - which worked, but was in Celsius (default German setting).

A fellow forum member ("nikpottala"– again, many thanks) pointed me to a link on [bimmer.roadfly.com \(http://bimmer.roadfly.com/bmw/forums/e39/7519918-1.html\)](http://bimmer.roadfly.com/bmw/forums/e39/7519918-1.html) that was posted by Jim Cash and included directions to replace the ignition switch on a 5 series. Using this as the basis for my repair, the below detailed steps are the steps I used to replace the ignition switch on my 2002 X5. Please note, a ton of credit must be given to Jim Cash for his original post, which has been modified and provided below (specific to the X5). Please also note that I took a ton of pictures in an attempt to provide as much information as possible, therefore don't be overwhelmed and think each picture represents a different step – I'm simply trying to provide as much detail as possible. It took about a 1 hour or so to complete the repair – and for what it's worth, my mechanic abilities normally stop at changing the oil and wiper blades. As a side note, the verbal quote I received from BMW to repair the ignition switch (them providing both part and labor) was \$423. I only say this because if I can do it, anyone can.

Ignition Switch - Part #61 32 6 901 961 (purchased from BavAuto.com for \$49.95) (Picture 18)

Tools:

- 10mm wrench for the battery (I had one in the trunk as part of the factory tool kit)
- Small Philips screwdriver (for top steering column plastic removal / installation – screw located at 12 o'clock position)
- T-25 torx bit (the bit looks like a star and is for bottom plastic removal / installation – screw located at 6 o'clock position)
- T-30 torx bit (for the mounting screws of the ignition switch)
- 1/8" slotted screwdriver (longer is better than shorter)
- 1/4" ratchet drive and socket that accepts the T-25 and T-30 bits

Replacement Directions:

Step 1: Place the steering wheel in the maximum up and out position.

Step 2: Disconnect the negative battery cable (located in trunk underneath spare tire)

Step 3: There is a plastic Philips screw (Picture 1) on top of the plastic cover at the 12 o'clock position, and one T-25 screw on the bottom (6 o'clock position) plastic cover (Picture 2 & 3). Once those are out, carefully remove the top and bottom plastic trim around the steering wheel column (a credit card came in handy when separating the top from the bottom cover) (Picture 4 & 5). Pull out the lower cover as far out (and down) as possible. Be very careful, as to not break tabs. After removal of bottom plastic piece, I recommend putting a piece of tape on the clip (Picture 6) (which is what the bottom plastic piece screws into on the bottom of the steering column) to keep it from falling down and behind the dash board (speaking from experience). Picture 7 shows the clip installed on the bottom of the steering column (again, the 6 o'clock position) which accepts the screw from Picture 3.

Step 4: You can see the ignition switch from the drivers door looking in (Picture 8), pull the tab on the wiring harness (Picture 9) and remove the connector from the ignition switch.

Step 5: There is a black bracket around the ignition switch held in by two torx 30 screws. I removed the bottom one completely (Picture 10) and loosened the top one (Picture 11 & 12) with

the ratchet drive showed in Picture 13.

Step 6: The switch itself has two very small screw pins on the bottom of the switch that hold it in place. The heads of the very tiny screw heads are marked with red paint (Picture 14). Scrape the paint away (I used a razor blade) and back the screw pins out using the 1/4" drive with 1/8" slotted tip (or a small screwdriver as noted in Picture 15 (I also used a pair of pliers to turn the small screw driver), you don't need to remove them completely.

Step 7: Pull the ignition switch out (Picture 16 shows ignition switch out), note the position of the input shaft on old ignition switch, align the new switch to the same position and install. Picture 17 shows what the ignition switch was attached to. The red paint remaining to the left and right shows where the small mounting screws were backed out.

Step 8: No secrets putting it back together, just reverse the instructions. A word of advice - be careful when re-installing the top screw (12 o'clock position) (from the first sentence in step 3) for it is plastic, as such, don't over tighten.

Best of luck -

Picture 1:



Picture 2:



Picture 3:



Picture 4:



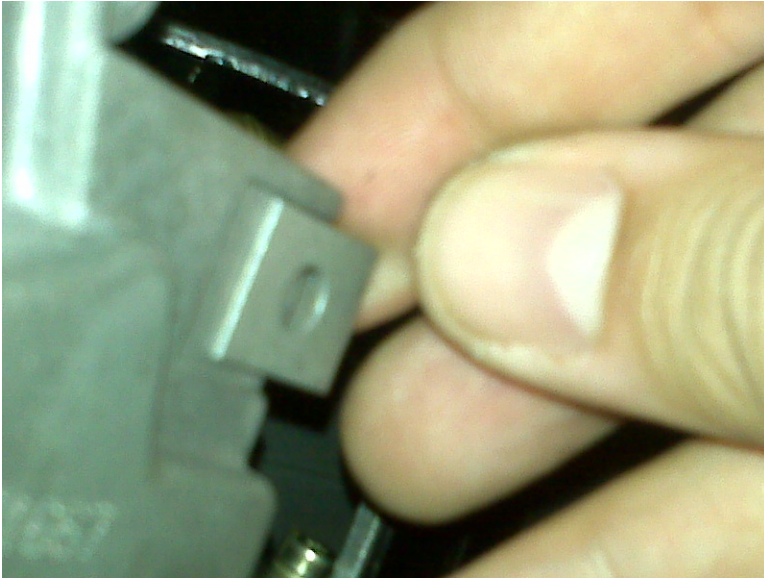
Picture 5:



Picture 6:



Picture 7:



Picture 8:



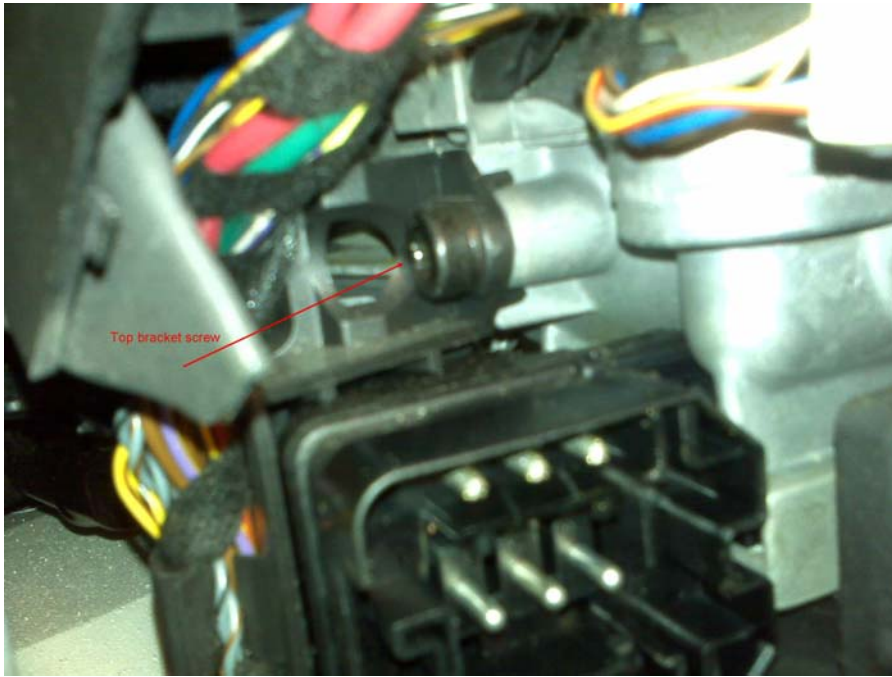
Picture 9:



Picture 10:



Picture 11:



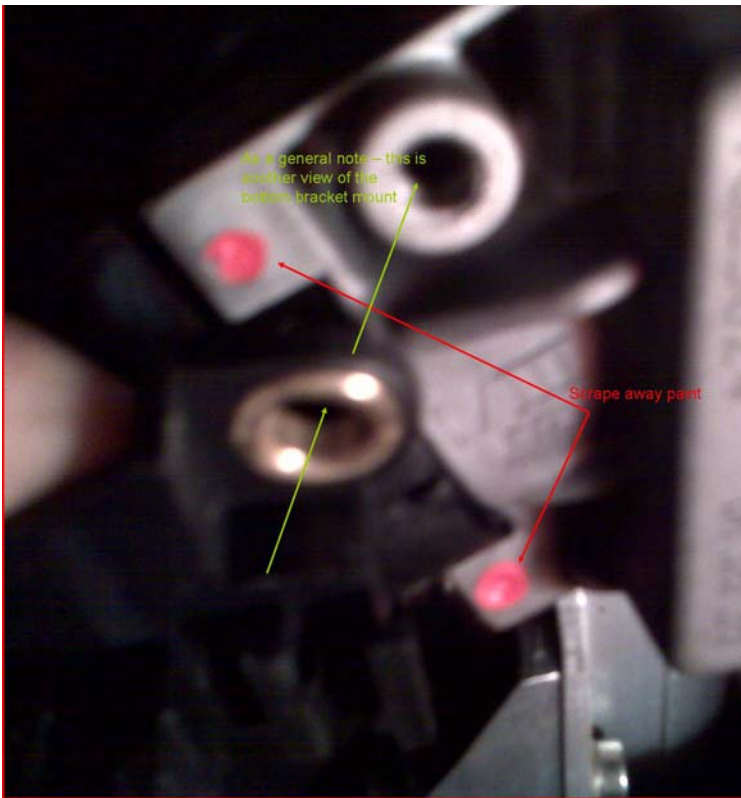
Picture 12:



Picture 13:



Picture 14:



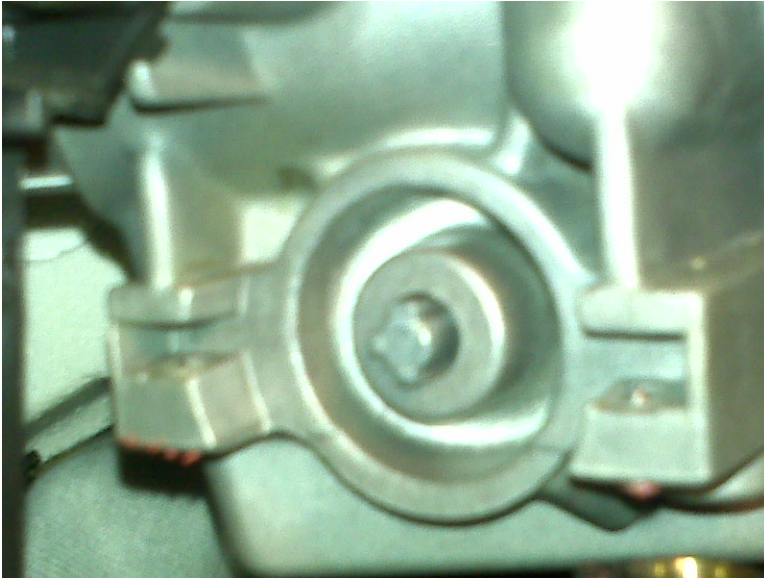
Picture 15:



Picture 16:



Picture 17:



Picture 18:

