

Tilt Steering Fix

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This is what I did to fix a loose steering column (at the pivot point for the tilt) on a '78 Cherokee. Hopefully this will be of help to others with the same problem.

Special equipment required: Universal puller set (this is what I used) or perhaps a regular steering wheel puller.

Disconnect battery

Remove horn button

Remove large nut and washer on steering shaft.

Remove the 3 screws in plastic insulator for horn button. Remove as an assembly: plastic insulator, metal dish, and metal plate.

Scribe an alignment mark from steering shaft to steering wheel so you can reassemble with the wheel in the correct orientation.

Use steering wheel puller and remove steering wheel.

Remove plastic anti-theft plate.

Install steering wheel puller over steering shaft, (be careful not to crush the plastic cancelling cam (it's also where the horn circuit comes through) and tighten shaft nut and washer (that you already took off) over puller.

Use two bolts and nuts and install with bolt through puller, with nut on the bottom so you can use the bolts to push on (compress) the steering lock plate.

Remove clip from steering shaft. NOTE: My Jeep technical service manual says NOT to re-use this clip. I've had mine out twice and have re-used it both times, the decision is yours.

Decompress lock plate.

Remove steering nut, washer, and steering wheel puller.

Remove lock plate.

Remove cancelling cam, and spring.

Remove 4 bolts securing support brace to steering column under dash.

Remove 2 bolts securing support to dashboard.

Remove column support brace.

Disconnect wiring coming from under the column, remove plug from it's holder and leave hanging.

Remove screw holding turn signal switch handle to switch assembly.

Remove 3 screws holding turn signal switch (you'll have to turn the switch to get to all 3 screws).

Remove turn signal switch, you should be able to feed the wires up through the column to give you enough slack to do this. You can get a little more slack by lifting the plastic cover (under the column) over the wires.

Put key in ignition lock. Turn to locked position. You should be able to see a small bar coming out of the end of the lock. Just to the right of that is a small slot, insert a small screwdriver into the slot and push. Remove key lock assembly. NOTE by Mike Saltsgaver: Every fsj (or AMC for that matter) that I've taken the ignition switch out of has had some die cast "flash" covering the small slot where you must push the tab to remove the lock. If you've never done one before, your totally lost because there's no slot where the book says there is. The fix is to take that very small screwdriver & "punch" thru the flash in order to get to the tab.

Use a pair of long nose pliers, and remove spring clips from shift indicator on top of steering column.

Remove shift indicator.

Remove 2 screws on top of column, shift indicator light, and metal cover.

Remove tilt handle.

Remove upper column housing (Painted housing where ignition key goes).

Reinstall tilt handle.

Tilt steering wheel in full up position.

There's a round metal piece towards the bottom with a square hole in it. Using a screwdriver, push in and turn about 1/4 turn until this piece comes out.

If it didn't come out with the metal cup in the above step, remove spring.

Using a puller tool (I made my own) remove pivot pins. This is what I did: Get a 1/2" open end wrench, the screw that came out of the turn signal handle, a washer & a nut that will fit the screw. Install nut onto screw until it bottoms out, and install washer against nut. Put the 1/2" wrench over the pivot pin (make sure the pin will go through the wrench ends when it's pulled or you'll strip something out). Install the screw into the pin, and tighten the nut until the pin is loose. This is what *I* did, something else, may work better for you.

Hold the housing on the column, pull on the tilt handle, and remove the housing.

That's all the disassembly there is. There should be 4 loose bolts after that. They're not regular bolts, they look almost like a torque bit. I used a 12pt 1/4" drive socket (don't remember what size). Remove one bolt at a time, clean it, apply locktight, and reinstall. Then reverse the disassembly instructions and you're finished. The pivot pins just press back in, not a problem.

Hopefully I didn't leave out too many steps. If anybody uses this info, please let me know how accurate or helpful this was, and feel free to add to this, I just went by memory here. I don't know what all years will be exactly the same. This how-to could also be used for lock replacement, just stop after step 22.

Chris Enos ('78 Cherokee, TH-400, Q-Track 16% OD P/T, 3.55, 33")