

Hi everyone,

Here is a brief overview of the known problem with most of the BMW E46 convertible tops. I had a problem with my 2002 330ci. Here is what was going on:

1. Sometimes the top will open all the way with no problems but while closing, the top will come down to the front and would start to latch before even closing all the way.
2. Lot of clicking noise but it still won't close. I had to close it manually.
3. Sometimes it won't even start to open.
4. Other times the storage lip won't open at all.

All these times, the red light on the panel kept on blinking. I called BMW and was told that there is a charge of \$175 to diagnose the problem. All these times the code reader will not give any codes for the problem. I decided to tackle the problem myself and here is what and how I resolved it. Because of plastic gears, all these e46 are going to have this issue.

Here are the steps to follow:

1. Remove the back seat.
2. In the middle of where the seat was, you will see black plastic box with two plastic tabs on each side. Pull the tabs and remove the plastic cover as shown in the pic.
3. Remove the three screws as shown



4. Remove the power cable and the sensor. To remove the sensor, just lift it up from the groove. The picture has the

sensor removed but shows the location.

5. Flip the box over

6. Remove the screw from the assembly

7. Pull the motor assembly out.



8. Check this. That is where the problem is if the center (square) is worn out, you have found the problem.



At this point, you have some options. BMW only offers the whole assembly for around \$500. You can buy it from eBay but my experience is that most of these units have a worn gear. At this point, I am working with a local mechanic who is offering the gears for \$90 + s&h. It did fix my problem so I decided to share my experience. If I missed something, please let know. If you do order the gear by itself (like I did), please follow the procedure.

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If you see that this gear is fine, do not proceed. Your problem is somewhere else. Close the unit and put everything back.