**Matt's seat upholstery fitting tips**

Please note that I generally supply seat upholstery fully-fitted to seat frames (a good second-hand exchange set from our stock which can be blasted and powder-coated if required at extra cost), though your own frames can be used if you can leave them with us in advance.

Since sets of upholstered seats cannot be economically or safely shipped, they will need to be collected from our workshop in Chichester (with your old seats left with us if we have used a set of our exchange frames).

If this is not a practical option for you we can supply the materials for you to fit yourself.

Please be aware that while not a hugely difficult job, it is time-consuming and care needs to be taken to avoid damaging the new upholstery. The following notes are based on standard later-type 2CV seats and have been made to assist you with the process, but we accept no liability if damage is caused to your new upholstery due to clumsy or inept attempts at fitting.

The materials we supply can be tailored to your needs and can include the following:

Fully stitched, ready-to-fit upholstery

New foam pads to attach to the frames prior to upholstery

Canvas seat-base supports

Hog rings (though special pliers are needed these are available online for £10-£15)

Rubber seat support bands

**Removing the seats from the car:**

**Rear seat:**

Pass the seat belts down through the slot in the rear seat cover and foam.

If one is fitted, unhook the back rod of the parcel shelf from its brackets. The felt hammock itself will come out with the seat, as it is screwed to it.

From inside the boot, disengage the two bolt-fixings from their brackets.

Tilt the seat frame forward, then open the back door and lift it out.

**Front seats:**

Remove the pins (which should be a loose fit, and are sometimes missing) from the central seat runner, as these will prevent the seat sliding out of its runners.

Hold the seat slider catch lever to one side, and slide the seat forward. There is just enough room for it to clear the runners though you may need an assistant to push the seat from behind, by sitting in the back of the car and using their feet to push the seat forward at its base.

**Stripping the old upholstery from the frames:**

Observe how the covers are fitted; take photos if you need to or do one seat first so you still have the others to refer to.

Turn the seats upside down and use a pair of side-snips or pliers to remove *all* the hog-rings.

Pop the retaining rods out of their holes in the seat frames and remove them from the seat covers (the rear seat has an additional rod at the top). Observe how these are positioned to replace later.

Slide the covers upwards and off the frames.

Remove the layer of foam which is glued to the frame.

Assess the condition of the seat supports and rubber bands. The canvas base supports are likely to need replacing (keep the wires) but the wire back supports can usually be re-used even if some of the paper tape needs repairing (I use masking tape for this).

I often find that the supports and rubbers in the backs of the front seats can be left in place and used again while all the other rubbers generally need replacing due to wear, age and UV damage.er

**Preparing the frames for new upholstery:**

Clean and re-paint the frames if necessary.

Use the wires from the old seat base supports in the new supports.

Using the holes in the seat frame as a reference, pierce holes in the new canvas supports with a sharp point.

Re-attach the supports with new rubbers, making sure the ends of the wires are curved downwards so they won't poke into the new foam or covers once fitted.

Use spray-glue to fit the new foam pads to the frames, gluing then to the frame edges and the base supports. Trim any excess foam from the top corners, but leave a generous edge of foam round the frames.

**Fitting the new upholstered covers:**

**Front seats:**

The front seat covers are left and right; make sure you fit them the right way round.

Gently pull the covers down the seat-backs, easing them into position. Don't pull hard or tug sharply, just pull gently on the 'tails' of the covers while smoothing the material downwards, massaging it from the top edge down the sides of the seat until the lower corners are against the angles of the seat frame.

Push the canvas connecting-piece through the gap between back and seat foam, then put the base of the seat cover in place, massaging it back until the rear corners are correctly positioned.

Thread the rods through their pockets at the lower edges of the covers.

Pop the front rod into its holes, then turn the seat upside down and gently pull the sides into place, popping the rods into the frame, making sure the outer sides are passed around the rods welded to the seat frame like the old ones were.

With the seat upside down and working from behind, pull the seat 'tails' for the seat pad back and pass them round the frame, hog-ringing them to the hooks of the rearmost seat rubbers. T

Pull the 'tails' of the back of the seat fully down and round the frame, so the lower corners of the cover are snug against the angles of the frame. Hog-ring them in place round the rods.

Pull the canvas joining piece forward and hog ring it to the canvas base support.

Pull the seat back elastics forward under the seat, unhook the appropriate outer seat rubber hook from the frame and pass it through the elastic, then hook it back in place.

**Rear seat:**

This needs to have the top rod inserted first, so turn the back of the cover partly inside-out to allow you to slide the rod through its pocket and through the central upright of the seat frame at the same time. Pop the ends into their holes.

Gently ease the back of the cover into place, turning it the right way out as you do so.

Ease, gently pull and stroke it into place until the lower edge is correctly positioned, then fit the base of the cover into place as with the front seats.

As with the front seats, hog-ring the back 'tails' of the seat pad in place, then the lower edges of the sides of the seat back.

Make sure the joined rear/lower edge of the upholstery is pushed into place through the gap between the back and seat foam.

Cut slits in the foam to allow the seat belts to pass through.

If you have a rear parcel shelf this will need to be screwed to the back of the seat through the upholstery and the holes are tricky to find so take extra care with this.

Finally grease the seat runners in the car and replace the seats.

If they don't slide easily, slightly loosen the bolts holding the runners in place so they can move a little, then re-tighten them once the seats are in place.

Matt's Soft Tops. 2020