

Volkswagen Cabriolet DIY Guide

Top and Frame Removal

This guide was originally hosted at <http://hometown.aol.com/atomicalex/cabtopremoval.html> .

This guide will give you some help removing the top and frame from your Volkswagen Rabbit Convertible or Cabriolet. All text and photos copyright "atomicalex" of VWvortex.com and *girl!*.

Tools needed:

- One ratchet with a 3" extension
- 10mm socket
- 13mm socket
- 17mm socket
- Phillips screwdriver
- Flathead screwdriver
- 10mm itty bitty 12pt box wrench
- Wire cutters
- Channellocks
- A box of zipper bags
- A Sharpie

Step 1



Open the boot (trunk). Look up and find the tabs that the headliner is secured with. Pull the headliner off the tabs and let it hang there.

Step 2



Remove the rear seat by unscrewing the two screws that hold it down. These are right in front of it. Bag the screws and label the bag. Bag and label every screw or other fastener you remove. There will be lots of them. Slide the seat bench forward and pull it out. Set it aside.

Step 3



Remove the rear seatback by unscrewing the two screws at the base of it. Open your boot and pull the release button, and then the release cord. This is a bit of a maneuver, but by lifting and pulling, the seatback will come out. Set it aside.

Step 4



Remove the window knob by prying up the cover and unscrewing it. This is in the Haynes and Bentley. Remove the interior card by pulling the door trim away from the edge and prying the fasteners loose. They will pop out. The seat belt trim may have a little holding knockout that will have to be pried up.

Step 5



When you get the interior card out, you will see the edge of the rear bolster trim. There are three Phillips screws. Remove them.

Step 6



If you follow the curve of the bolster, you will see two more screws that would be hidden by the seatback. Remove those two screws. Pull the top release handle off its lever. Remove the bolster trim.

Step 7



With the bolster trim out, look carefully at the frame mounting. The top should be fully down but released at this time. Note which bolt is visible and mark it with the pen.

Step 8



Raise the top halfway.

Step 9



Study the frame mounting. You will see a cluster of 3 bolts, a fourth bolt holding the gas [strut], and a fifth bolt perpendicular to those two. If you look carefully, you will also see the end of the rear cable for the top.

Step 10



Remove the gas shock bolt. Remove the perpendicular bolt. Take the nut off the rear tension cable.



Step 11



Get out of the car and remove the screws from the [caps] where the boot snaps on.



Step 12

Get back in the car. Take out the two unmarked bolts by first loosening all three bolts. When you have removed two bolts from each side, lower the top. Remove the last bolt. The top will pop a bit. Since the tension cable is loose on both sides, begin to pull the top out of the channel. Work from each side toward the back. You will likely need to pull on the corded part of the top. Just yank it loose. Peel the top back.

Step 13



Next step could be done before, but I didn't think about it. Duh. You now have to free the window frame hinges and the rear headliner tabs. Pull the top up at the back and look for the hinge mounts. Each has two bolts. Remove the bolts. The itty bitty wrench is your friend for the bottom one. If you did this while the top was still on the car, you could probably reach both with a socket.

Step 14



The rear headliner tabs are secured with a fitting that is screwed and bolted into place. One screw and three bolts. You can see the screw and one bolt here.

Step 15



And another bolt here.

Step 16



The removed headliner fitting is here. Note the plastic rod that is in the headliner tab.

Step 17



Now, gently grab the entire top and lift it off the car. Try not to scratch your paint. A friend would be very helpful here. The whole thing weighs close to 80 pounds.

Step 18



Your top and frame are now removed.

* * Remember, **you** are responsible for working on **your** car; Cabby-Info.com, "atomicalex", VAG, VWoA, or anyone else are not responsible if **anything** goes wrong while **you** are working on, in and under **your** car!
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