

Choose The Cruise

Got an old 5-Series, a control-freak streak and a penchant for a bit of cruising? A transplant could make fitting cruise control a cheaper, easier option.

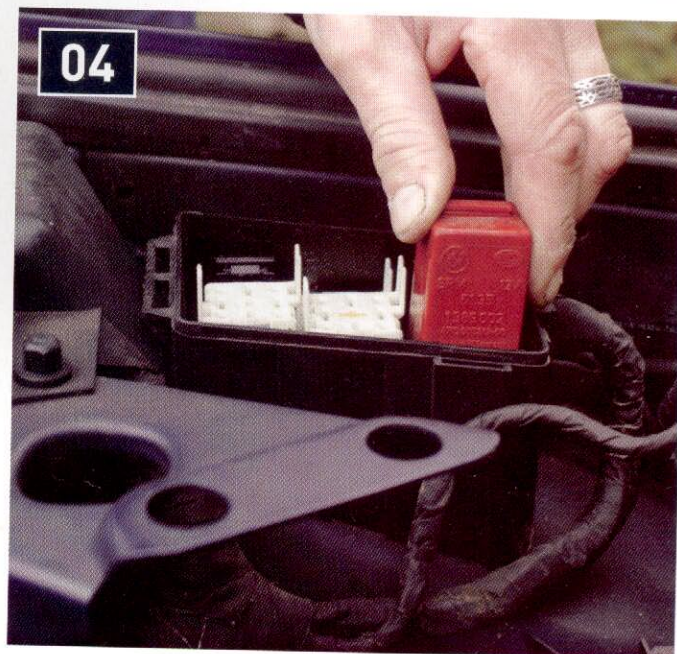
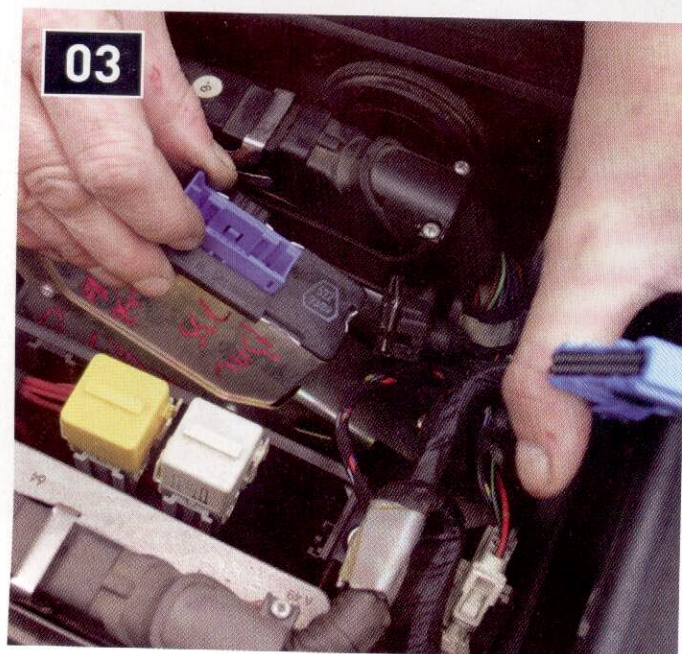
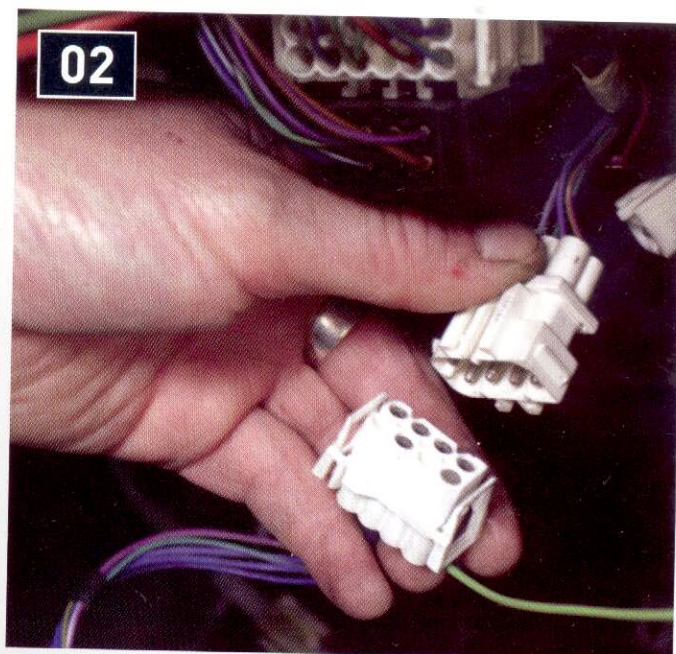
Words Andrew Everett
Photography Matt Harvey

Cruise control is one of those things you can probably take or leave — personally I wouldn't pay much extra for it when ordering a new car and to be honest, I'm not keen on the current system with buttons on the steering wheel. Give me an extra stalk any day of the week. But if you could fit a cruise control system for a couple of hours' work and around £30-40, you would probably go for it. It is certainly good to have if you do a lot of long motorway trips

and there is no doubt that it will save you fuel. There aren't many E34 5-Series with cruise control fitted, whereas most 7-Series of comparable age (such as 730i SE and 735i SE) have it. There are now plenty of dead ones to rob parts from, and it goes straight in with no extra wiring. However, there are certain provisos. The system changed in September 1989 (stalk, ECU, clutch switch bracket), so if the donor car wears a G-registration plate, you need to find out exactly

when it was built — a dealer will be able to tell if it's the early or late type. Also, early E32 7-Series cars up to 1987 (D- and early E-reg) have a different column stalk, which is no good for a later car or an E34. Post-1989 systems will work on a 518i with the M43 engine, the late 12-valve Sixes, the 24-valve cars and the V8s, including the 3.6 and 3.8 M5. Some basic spec cars don't have the cruise control loom and if yours doesn't, forget it. BMW does sell the loom, but it is an absolute nightmare to fit. >





1 Firstly, you need the stalk. Removing it from a scrap car without the key is a real pain, but the first thing you should do is remove the lower column shroud, which you will need.

Remove the steering wheel first — this is impossible without the key, but you will be able to remove the centre nut and pull the wheel back enough to access the two top screws.

Remove the two lower screws at either side of the column adjust lever, and remove the column shroud. Also, lift the upper shroud up and out.

2 The stalk is removed by pressing in the two tangs and pulling it out of the column bracket

— don't worry, the bracket is there on all cars. Cut the tie-wraps, follow the wiring down to the plug and remove the stalk.

Fitting it to your car is simple — you just clip it into the column holder, plug the harness into the car's loom connector (they all have one), tie-wrap the wiring out of the way and fit the cruise control model's lower column shroud.

3 The next thing you need is the ECU unit. This is in the main ECU box in the corner of the engine bay. Remove the four cross-head screws. They could well snap off in the alloy base box and if they do, refit the cover with clear silicon sealer. The ECU is the slim unit with the blue plug —

two 10 mm nuts and it's out. On your car, the blue plug will be tie-wrapped up in the ECU box, with a small plastic bag over the end which needs to come off.

4 Look in the relay box on the other side of the engine bay. The top unclips by hand; you'll need the red relay unit.

5 Now for the motor. Make sure your car has the wiring connector here because if it hasn't, it will be game over.

The wiring connector simply twists on and off but if you're not sure, snip the wiring on the donor car and figure it out when you get home. (See 5a). Another two 10 mm nuts, and the motor will lift out.

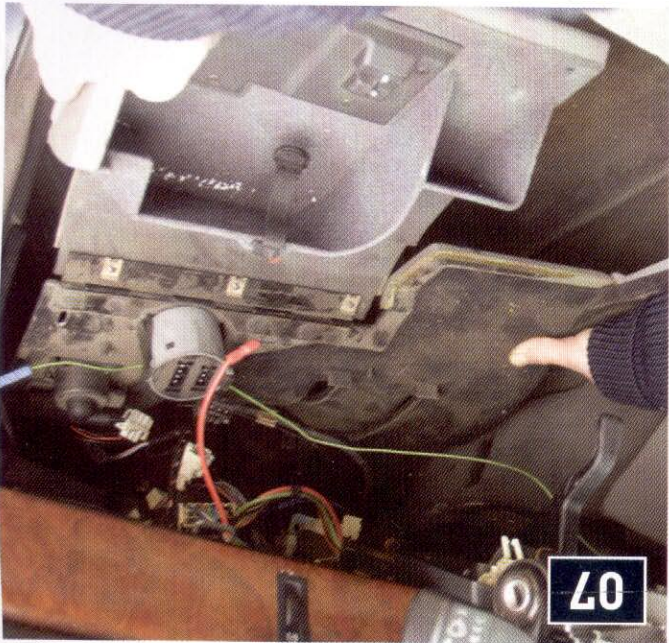
The cable will just unclip from the throttle lever on the engine. Keep the two retaining nuts, because your car won't have them.

6 If your car has a manual gearbox, this is where you will experience the tricky bit.

BMW sells a clutch switch that will cancel the cruise control if you press the clutch pedal to avoid over-revving the engine. The part number is 61 31 1 379 968 and the switch bolts into the pedal box by the brake pedal pivot, though getting the 10 mm bolt in is a pain. It's a standard 10 mm bolt and flat washer too, which is not shown on the BMW parts CD — your dealer should be able to find you one.



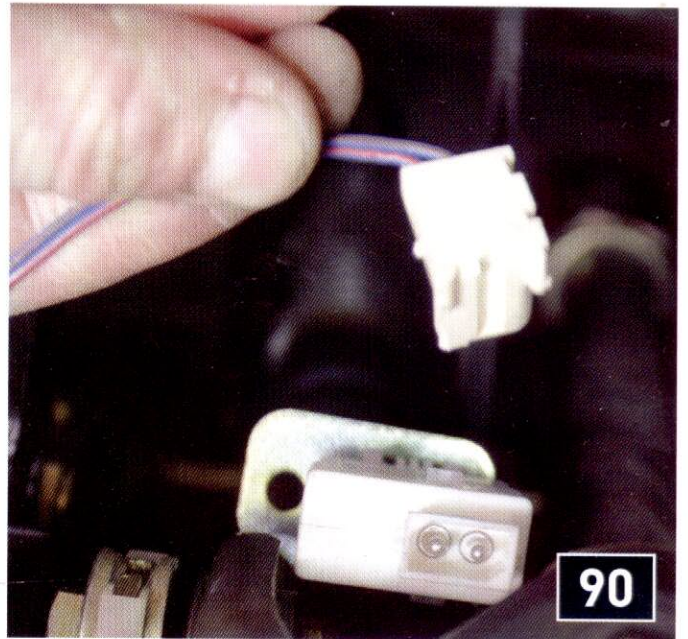
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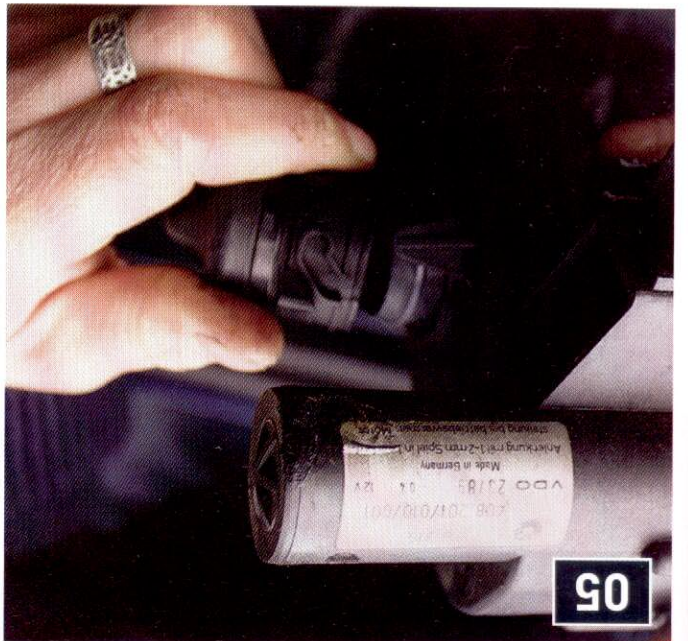
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05a



06



05

Before you attempt to fit the bracket, press the clutch switch of cars that have automatic transmission with this wiring plug will need to have the connectors bridged, or the cruise control will not work.

8 And that's all there is to it — it's all sorted. To engage the cruise control, you will need to press the stalk away from you — you will feel it bite. To disengage the cruise control, you can press the stalk down (off), or alternatively you can touch the brake pedal. To accelerate with the cruise engaged, just press the stalk away from you and you will feel the car accelerating.

7 You're almost there! Remove the lower fascia cover and don't forget that you will need a torch to do all this. To complete the installation, look for the loose electrical plug with two wires (these are usually coloured blue/red and blue/brown). You should then plug it

When fitting the bracket, look at where the brake light switch goes on the brake pedal and all will become clear.

it will be a tight fit. This can only go in one way and into the bracket. You'll find that 61311379131 on pre-1989 cars) (part number 61 318 360 421, or bracket, press the clutch switch into the clutch switch. Owners of cars that have automatic transmission with this wiring plug will need to have the connectors bridged, or the cruise control will not work.