

# Seat Cover Replacement

by BassCliff

Hello to all of you out there riding your classic Suzuki GS motorcycles. If you're like me, you've recently acquired a 20-something year old motorcycle with a lot of the original rubber, vinyl, and plastic. My bike had the original seat when I bought it and was in good shape. But after riding it every day for 7 months and having it sit out in the summer sun while I was at work, I was saddened one day when I saw a small tear along a seam. It wasn't long until it looked like this:



So I decided to pick up a SaddleSkin seatcover by Travelcade. The part number for my bike was S633. I got mine from Dennis Kirk, but they are fairly widely available from many online vendors for around \$60 (US).

I was hoping to preserve the original seat trim. But unfortunately I discovered too late how brittle it is. Two of the original plastic speed bolts were already broken and replaced by a previous owner. Then I broke a couple more during this procedure (I'll tell you now to avoid it). So like many of these bikes, the trim was not replaced. But I kept it just in case I get the urge to repair and replace it later.

So let's get started...

When I bought my bike, it already had a small hole in the seat. I had always planned to use some vinyl repair, but never got around to it. Here's the seat on my work table:



The first thing I did was flip it over and remove the hinges, latch and grab rail.





Here's some of what you'll see under the seat; hooks and clips to hold the edge of the seat cover and the grab rail bolts.



Here is a close up to give you a better view.



The hinges and latch used 10mm nuts:



The grab rail bolts are 12mm. They get removed next.





Now we'll start on the speed nuts that hold the trim. These don't spin on and off, you just push them on and the tabs in the middle grip the plastic "bolts" to fasten in place. You DO NOT want to remove the speed nuts like this.



I broke two before I realized that I must pry a couple of the tabs up before they come off. Doh! I used a pair of wire cutters to pry up a couple of tabs, then the nuts came off easily.



Lesson learned, the trim is finally off.



A previous owner had broken a couple and replaced the broken bits with a regular long bolt and nut. I had some extra hardware but decided it was too much trouble and kind of ugly.





If your trim and speed nuts survive this ordeal, you can straighten out the speed nuts by pressing them flat with a pair of pliers.



Once you pry up the clips you can start to loosen the old cover.



Leave the small trim on the sharp edge of the seat pan. Hopefully you won't have to replace it.

Continue by prying up the hooks. Pull the edge away from the hook. My original cover has a wire running through the edge seam. This makes it easy to remove from the hooks.



Here's a view along one side showing the hooks and clips after the cover is loose.





Now that the cover is loose we can take it off. Be careful of the rotten material you may find under there. Don't make a mess on your wife's freshly vacuumed floor.



Here's a shot of the naked foam. Mine was in pretty good shape. You may have to buy a foam repair kit if yours is not.



It's time for the new cover. It's a tight fit and it's just going to take some muscle and coaxing to get it in place. Here's where I started.



Start at one end and work your way toward the other going back and forth from side to side, pulling and tucking. I found it easier to put the seat upside down in my lap while fitting the cover.





Once you get the seat all the way around the pan go ahead and bend the middle clips tight to hold it in place. We can always adjust these a little as we go.



I found it also helped me to pull the drawstring to help get the seams in place and over the edges before I hooked them or clipped them into their final positions.



I went around the pan, prying up the hooks.



I would pull the seam over the hook. Then I'd use a little screwdriver to “set” the seam in the hook, pinching it under.





So as not to mar the material, I'd use a pair of pliers with a towel to clamp the hook onto the cover, holding it in place.



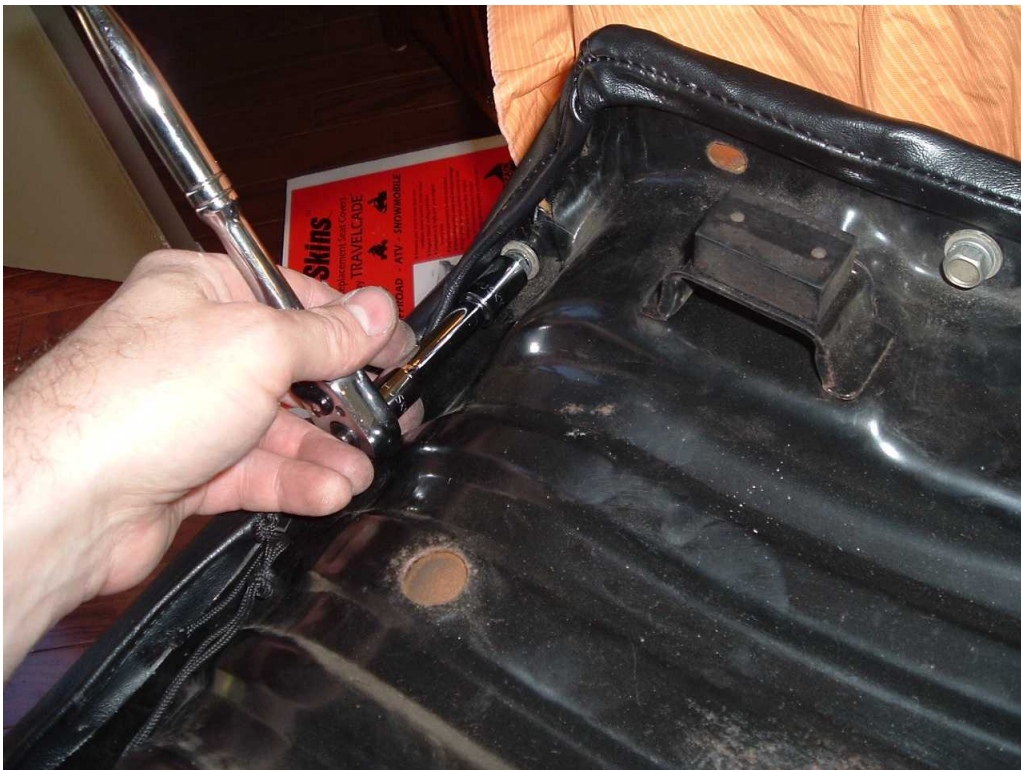
I worked my way around the pan in this manner so that it started to look something like this.



It may take a few extra pulls and tucks as you work your way around. Once I had gone all around, making adjustments, “resetting” some hooks and clips, a few nips and tucks, tied the string tight, I ended up with this.

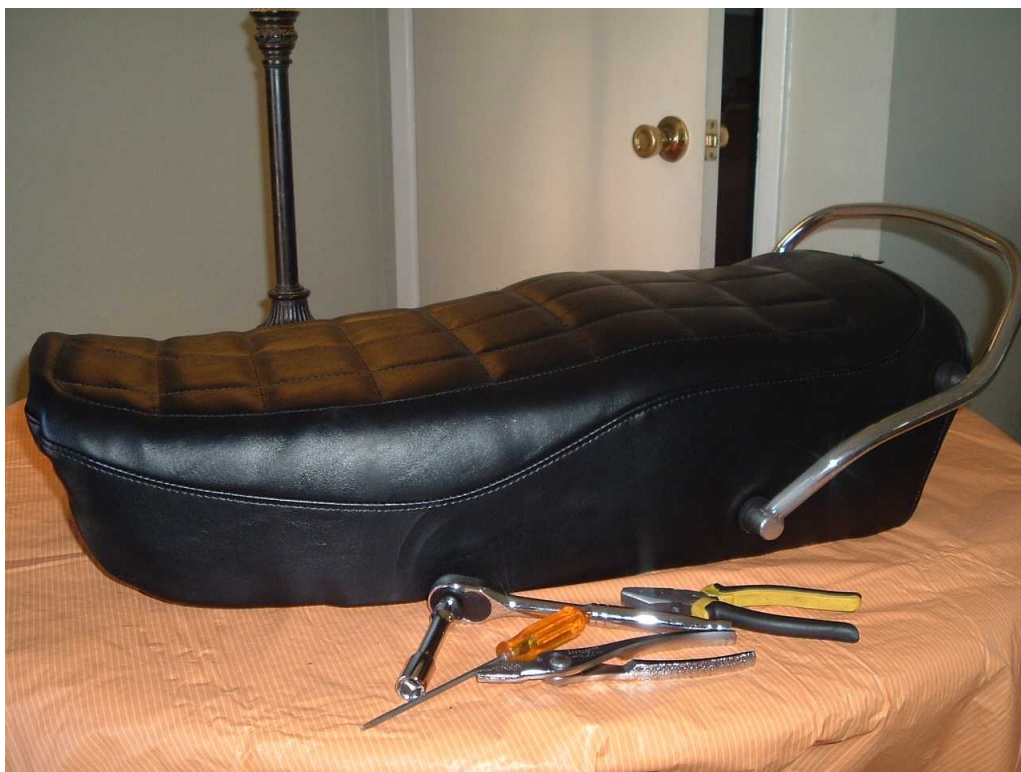


Since I had decided not to try and reinstall the trim, I went ahead with reinstalling the grab rail. I used an exacto knife to slice a small slit through the cover at each of the mounting holes. Then I bolted on the grab rail.





And here's the new cover with the grab rail.



Next came bolting the hinges and latch back on the bottom.



I found the new cover's seams were a little bigger so things were fitting pretty snugly. Just tighten it up, it'll be OK. The new vinyl will get out of your way.

Now it's time to put the seat back on my bike. Again, the new vinyl is thicker and makes everything a bit more snug, but it will compress as you put it back together.



My latch didn't catch properly so I had to loosen the bolts and adjust the latch until it fit and closed correctly.





Once the seat would close, lock, and open properly I could stand back and admire my handiwork.



I'd like to add a few tips from my friends on the GSR Forums. Thanks to Mr. Joe Nardy, Mr. Planecrazy, and Ms. SqDancerLynn1. You can either bend the speed nut tabs to remove them without breaking the plastic, or pick up some extra speed nuts and just clip the old ones off. Then using a hair dryer to apply a little heat will let the new cover stretch into place more easily. Residual wrinkling can be minimized with a little heat and a little more stretching and re-crimping underneath.

I hope this helps you install your new seat cover. It's not an exact science and will involve some trial and error. Now I guess I'd better shine up the rest of my bike so that the new seat cover doesn't look out of place.

Thank you for your indulgence,

BassCliff

Be sure to visit the [GSR Resources](#) website for lots of great information on these classic bikes. Then stick around and get to know the great folks in the community.