

SECTION 8

BODY & INTERIOR Projects 38-41

PROJECT 38 ★

Replacing the Convertible Top

Time: 5 hours

Tools: 12- and 10-millimeter sockets, drill, $\frac{1}{4}$ " bit, Phillips screwdriver, rivet gun

Talent: ★★

Applicable years: All

Tab: \$300 and up

Tinware: New top, contact cement, or double-sided tape

Tip: A friend will make things easier

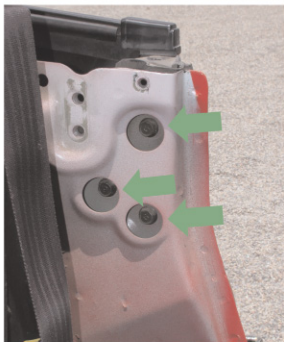
Performance gain: A dry interior and a see-through rear window

The downside to a convertible is that the top will eventually wear out. It's usually fairly obvious when it's time to replace it.

When choosing a replacement top, there are a number of options. You can get a straight replacement that's similar to the one that came with the car. For the NA cars, there are several companies that make tops with glass rear windows for better visibility. You can also get a "three-window" top, similar to those used on the MGB. The material of the top itself can be either vinyl or cloth, and you can even get different colors if you want.

This job is often feared by backyard mechanics. It will take some time to do, but fundamentally it isn't difficult. Having someone else to help will make the work easier and quicker. In the 2002 service manual, Mazda shows that the work can be done with the top still on the car, but the chances of an accidental scratch would be higher.

Start by removing the seats. This will make your job a lot easier, and there are only four bolts holding each seat to the floor. Slide the seat all the way forward to expose the ones at the rear, then backwards to find the other bolts. Make sure there aren't any electrical connections underneath before you carefully lift them out.



These are the three main bolts that attach the top frame to the car, visible after you remove the quarter trim. There are two studs on the other side of this panel that align the hinge.