Opel GT Steering Column Maintenance:

Partial disassembly of the GT steering column, allows access for maintenance to spray-clean and lubricate the ignition switch (with a solvent like WD40, to eliminate internal carbon buildup), tighten collar bolts to eliminate steering column shaft looseness, and access to change the (often cracked or broken) turn signal/high-beam ring.

Getting the Tools to Do the Job:

It’s necessary to acquire a special steering wheel puller tool and/or stub-ended bits before starting, and to pay careful attention to written procedures, to accomplish successfully. Not doing so, may disable the vehicle, and good-condition replacement Opel GT steering columns and parts are now becoming harder to find. (Another method is to remove the 6 allen-head bolts, and threading long metric 6mm bolts into the six holes that hold the steering wheel, and pulling the hub off that way, but this isn’t recommended, as the soft threads of the metal hub easily strip).

Options Are:

1. Find an Opel-approved “Kent-Moore J-21686” tool (which haven’t been made since the 1970’s). (Note: Observe below, that it has a special cap-piece, used to protect soft steering shaft end threads)
2. Make replicas of the special puller bits from a pair of hardened 5/16” bolts (4” long) by grinding off the heads to fit the oval holes in the steering wheel hub piece (Specifications shown below. Also requires a nut, and use with a flat-surface puller. Process is fully detailed in the OMC Blitz of 6/1997 & 9/1988).
3. Buy NAPA #3510 bits, and use with a flat-surface steering wheel puller from KD Tools or similar (avoid the rounded type harmonic balancer pullers, as they tend to slip and damage steering shaft threads).
4. Buy Uni-Tool’s #UT7404 puller (about $42. in year 2006, with UPS shipping from Canada, using PayPal), as recommended by posters to opelgt.com. (Note: The shorter length of its bit tips, requires also pulling the metal horn ring during use, to avoid damage).
Removing the Opel GT Steering Wheel Metal Hub:

1. Drive the car in a straight line, and lightly mark the relative position of the top center of the steering wheel -- on the outer metal hub (so you can align with the top center of the main part of steering column, when reassembling).
2. Park car with steering wheel in the same position as it is when pointing “straight ahead” (even if wheel is off-center).
3. Remove the key. Disconnect the battery ground cable.
4. Remove the padded horn cap.
5. Pry back the metal lock-tabs (if they are there), and use a 15mm wrench or socket, to loosen and remove the main 15mm nut on the shaft. Remove slotted washer. (If you’re using the UT-7404 tool, you also have to remove the 3 screws, springs, and horn ring, to fit the puller bits in place).
6. Spray a bit of WD40 lubricant onto the splines of the shaft.
7. **Position the steering wheel removal bits and tool:**
   7a. If using a puller other than the Kent-Moore #J-21686, consider placing a thin-wall 10mm socket (as a “cap”) over the threaded end of the steering shaft (to avoid deforming its threads).
   7b. Place puller in position, so that the 2 special bits can be inserted through the oval holes in the metal steering wheel hub, then rotate each bit approximately 90 degrees towards the main steering shaft, so that the tips “grab” the metal hub from the inside. (Inscribe the tops of the bits with arrows pointing to their stub ends, so you can know when their tips are rotated to the correct position in the hub).
   7c. Tighten puller, and ensure the tip rests on the back of the thin-wall 10mm socket on the end of the steering shaft. If you choose not to use a socket there, make sure the puller has a direct fit to contact the end of the steering shaft, as otherwise the soft metal threads at the end of the shaft will deform (If the threads do get deformed, they require re-cutting with a 10mm x 1.5 die tool, to fit the 15mm nut).
8. Tighten puller, making sure it’s in a straight position relative to the steering column shaft’s center, until metal steering wheel hub “pops” off the shaft. Do not strike shaft or hub during this process, as internal steering components easily damage. Back off and realign puller if it slips during this process, to avoid deforming the soft-metal shaft threads.
9. Once the metal hub is removed, to access the ignition switch you have to remove the lock cylinder and the metal steering column outer housing piece.
   9a. Unscrew and remove the turn-signal stalk (on 1968-69 GT’s, leave it hanging & protect the internal wire).
   9b. Rotate the key in the ignition switch to the “on” (but not “start”) position, and use a bent paper-clip to press the small “peg” retainer through the small hole in the sleeve for the lock cylinder, and carefully pull the lock cylinder out. (On most 1970-1973 GT’s, this hole is on top of the sleeve, but on some early 1968-69 GT’s it’s on front of the sleeve).
   9c. Remove the large Phillips-head screw on the sleeve.
   9d. Remove the 3 small Phillips-head screws that hold the metal steering column outer housing piece (Marked “X”).
   9e. Carefully rotate and pull the metal outer piece, over the internal components, and slightly press the sleeve left if necessary, to remove the metal outer piece from the column.
Servicing the Opel GT Ignition Switch:

(9f) The small screw that holds the ignition switch to the end of the sleeve, can now be removed, and the switch itself can be serviced. Be careful at this point, not to tap the steering column, as the internal safety-lock “A” is spring-loaded, and if it rotates from external vibrations, you will have to rotate the “cross-shaped” shaft (in the sleeve) back to correct position, to reinstall switch.

(10) To clean the switch, spraying solvent (such as WD40) in the gap around the cross-shaped middle, then rotating with a flat-head screwdriver back and forth a few times. Repeat, until a “milky” carbon liquid drips away.

(11) To remove switch, for rebuilding or replacement, you need to pull it from the steering column with its wiring harness attached (re-soldering is tricky when the switch is on the column itself). First you need to remove the white plastic plug on the end of the harness. Draw a diagram of which color wires go in each of the 6 terminals (for reference during reassembly, as some 69-70 GT’s use a brown/white wire for high-beam circuit, and don’t have the gray wire shown).

Then reach with a small “jeweler’s” type flathead screwdriver into the narrow slot in front of the white plug (to flatten each wire’s small retainer tab), then pull each wire out individually.

Once wires are freed, remove red wire from the top of the brown turn signal activator. Then tie a piece of string to the end of the harness & pull switch and harness out through the column. (Leave string in, for harness reassembly)

(12) To install a switch, use string to first thread its harness through the holes in the column and support plate (using a string to pull) and reconnect red wire. On the column, both the switch and the lock cylinder have to be in the “on” position, to attach to the “cross-shaped” connector. You also need to verify safety lock “A” is in the recessed position (NOT protruding, unlike the diagram position shown below), then reinstall switch at Point “B.”. Make sure the cross-shaped middle of the switch sits easily (don’t force it) onto the cross-shaped connector (in the “sleeve” area). Install small holding screw. Then test if the switch turns accurately by installing the lock cylinder, making sure that its small metal button is aligned and fits into sleeve hole “C.” Rotate key, to make sure the switch rotates fully and springs back from “start” position. If key can’t rotate fully from “lock” to “start,” repeat the installation procedure, until switch operates correctly.
**Additional Steering Column Services:**

(14) The turn signal ring is now accessible and can be serviced if desired. To do so, remove center coil spring, internal brass horn contact ring (detach its brown wire end) and remove center snap ring. Rotate both white plastic pointed detent cams, and as you lift the ring, catch the spring-loaded ball bearing, hidden beneath the top underside of ring. If the ring is replaced, the new wire should be spliced to the old wire. Clean and grease the ball bearing (the grease helps hold it in place on top of the small spring) and grease the turning area of the new turn signal ring and the surface of the brass interior horn ring. When reinstalling, make sure the “peg” of the ring is in place on the center of switch & the BB is centered in place, then install snap-ring.

(15) A maintenance step, recommended every time you access the GT Steering Column, is to center the yoke, then to tighten the three 10mm collar bolts (shown at right).

(16) Re-install internal brass horn ring and its spring retaining ring, making sure to insert clip of brown wire into back of horn ring.

(17) To reinstall the metal outer housing, remove lock cylinder, then rotate the outer metal housing into place. Carefully reinstall the 3 small phillips-head screws (labeled as “X” on previous page) with magnetic tip screwdriver (or dab of grease, to hold screw-heads). Shining a flashlight to locate holes, also helps.

(18) Align and install screw on sleeve. Insert rubber insulator, then screw on the turn signal stalk (1970-1973 GT’s). Insert the lock cylinder. Insert insulator around lock cylinder (if equipped).

(19) Align metal hub, and reinstall on splines of steering column shaft.

(20) Install slotted and lock-tab washers. Torque main 15mm nut to hold in place. Install brass horn ring, if necessary. Place on padded hub. Road-test.

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**Exploded View Index (Below):**

A= Steering Shaft  
B= Metal Outer Housing  
C= Rubber Insulator, T. Signal  
D= Turn Signal Detent Cam  
E= Ball Bearing, T. Signal Ring  
F= Turn Signal Ring  
G= Turn Signal Stalk ('70-'73 GT shown)  
H= Snap Ring, for Turn Signal Ring  
I= Brass Horn Ring, Internal  
J= Metal Hub & Steering Wheel  
K= Padded Hub Cover

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**Exploded View, of External Horn Ring Components:**

**Exploded View, of Steering Column Components (in general):**
OMC Newsletters: “THE BLITZ”
(Print version black/white; Online in color)

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