

Opel GT: “Major” Model Year Part Changes

During the original 1968-1973 Opel GT (1.9 engine) production run, many individual part designs were changed. (These are noted in the “What Year Is It?” article found online at www.opelclub.com, from page link at “Opel GTFAQ”) Most changes primarily affected just the look of the parts. However, not only did many prior owners of Opels install model-year “incorrect” parts, but the design of certain critical parts affects your ability to repair or replace them (and by extension, whether you can continue to drive the car). So, “major” Opel model-year changes, are profiled here.

Engine/Cylinder Head

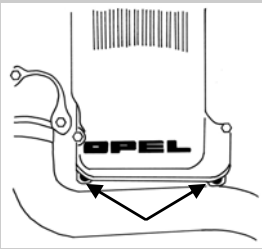
Early (1968-1972) Opel 1.9 cylinder heads had a “10-bolt” design, which is different than **Later** (1972-1975) Opel 1.9 cylinder heads which had a “12-bolt” design.

This is important to being able to order the correct head gasket, and is also a clue to being able to inspect for other major engine part changes

Do additional research, to learn Opel varieties of:


Valves and Keeper style changes.
 Valve lifter types: solid or hydraulic
 Piston top design: Low or High compression
 Camshaft type & Cam bearings: (3 or 4 bearings)
 Camshaft front nylon spacer bolt length, etc
 (Engine part changes are covered in more detail in the Sept/Oct 2007 Blitz).

Do you have a 10-bolt (early) or a 12-bolt (late) style cylinder head??

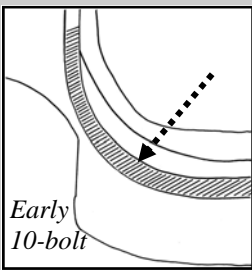


Early 10-bolt

Later Model Opel CIH engines (after 1972) had an extra pair of head bolts.



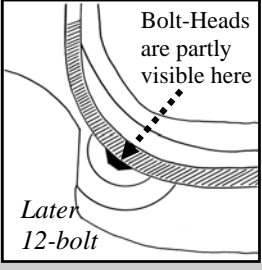
These can be seen at the front upper edge of the head. (They have 6mm allen-heads, are about 4 5/8” long, and bolt to 2 threaded holes on the top of late-style timing covers).



Early 10-bolt

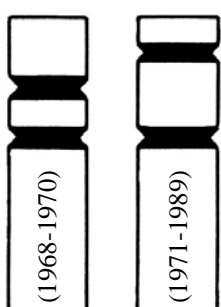
Inspect Your Engine Top, to Compare:

Earlier 10-bolt style Opel cylinder heads (1968-1972), do not have these 2 bolts.

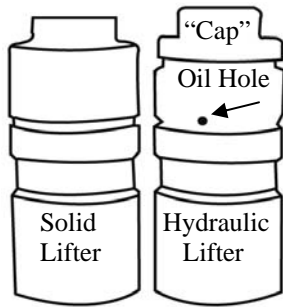


Later 12-bolt

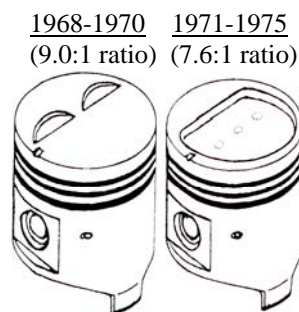
Bolt-Heads are partly visible here



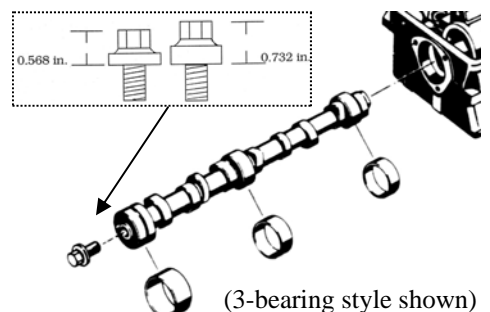
Changes: Valve Notch Patterns



Valve Lifter Types



Piston Top Designs

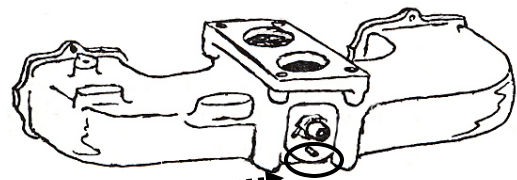


Camshafts, Bearings & Nylon Spacers

Intake Manifold:

A main difference between Opel Intake Manifolds, was the location of the crankcase ventilation port (which connects to the smaller port on the GT Valve Cover)

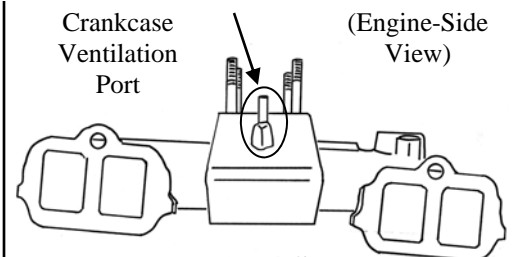
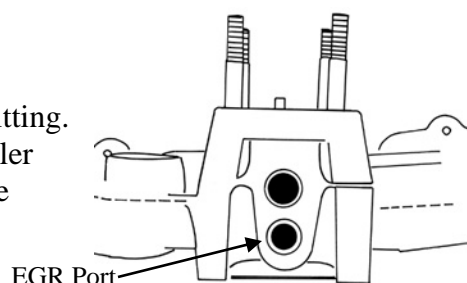
1968-1972: Smaller port, is located below main side fitting



1968-1972 Style

1973-1974 Style

A port for the “EGR” (emissions-control) valve, was threaded below the main side fitting. To accommodate this, the smaller port fitting, was relocated to the side facing the engine.



1973-1974 Style

Seat Belts: 1968—1971 Opel GT's had a **4-Piece Design**
(Driver's Side is shown; Passenger Side orientation is reversed)

Seat Belts: 1972-73 Opel GT's had **3-Piece design**
(Driver's Side is shown; Passenger is reversed)

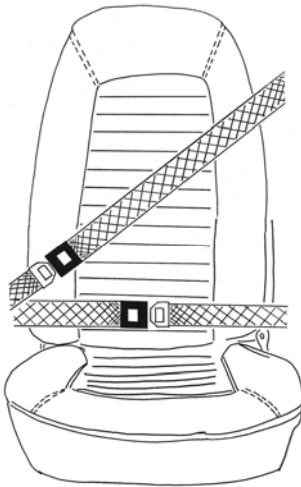
Lap Clip:

About 11"-12" long

Lap Belt w/ Buckle:

1968-69: @ 39" long
1970-72: @ 33" long

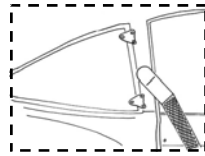
(Connects to bolt in hole, on side of transmission hump)



Shoulder Belt w/ Buckle:

1968-1969: About 52" long
Mount is located under the rear quarter window.

1970-1972: About 42" long
Mounts to the post behind the door (as shown below)



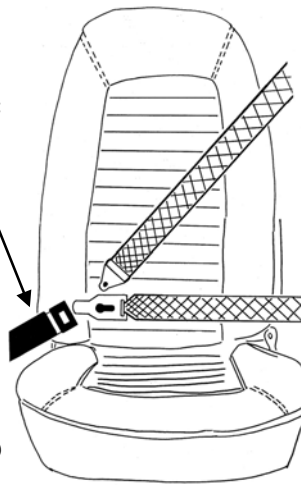
Lap Clip:

1968-1969: About 12" long
1970-1972: About 22" long
(Connects to bolt in hole, on inside of rocker panel)

Lap Belt w/ Buckle:

A stiff plastic buckle, about 11" long

(Connects to bolt in hole, on side of transmission hump)



Shoulder-Belt:

About 50" long

Lap Belt:

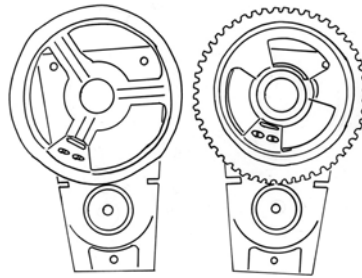
About 39" long, attached to a retractor and through a floor bracket

Window Regulators:

"Early" 1968-1970 Opel GT's used a window regulator (attached to the window crank handle, located on the inside of the door) with a *wider* 3 3/4" diameter pulley (& longer 80-82" cable)

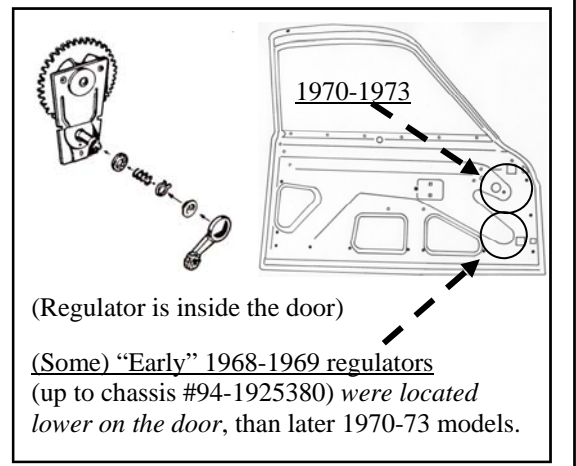
"Late" 1971-1973 Opel GT's used a window regulator with a *narrower* 3" diameter pulley. This regulator had a slightly shorter 75-76" cable.

(Note: The GT regulators are not to be confused with the similar-design Opel Kadett regulator, which had a longer 89" cable)



EARLY

LATE



(Regulator is inside the door)

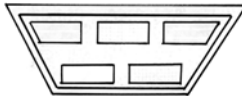
(Some) "Early" 1968-1969 regulators (up to chassis #94-1925380) were located lower on the door, than later 1970-73 models.

Dash Gauge Panels

There were 3 designs used on the GT.

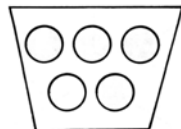
1968-early 1970 GT:

Had 2 center mount screws, and 4 upper-mount pins. Identified by "angular" lenses on center 5-warning light panel.



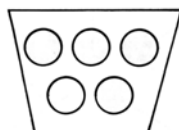
Later 1970 GT:

Had 2 center mount screws, and 4 upper mount pins. Had "circular" lenses on center 5-warning light panel.

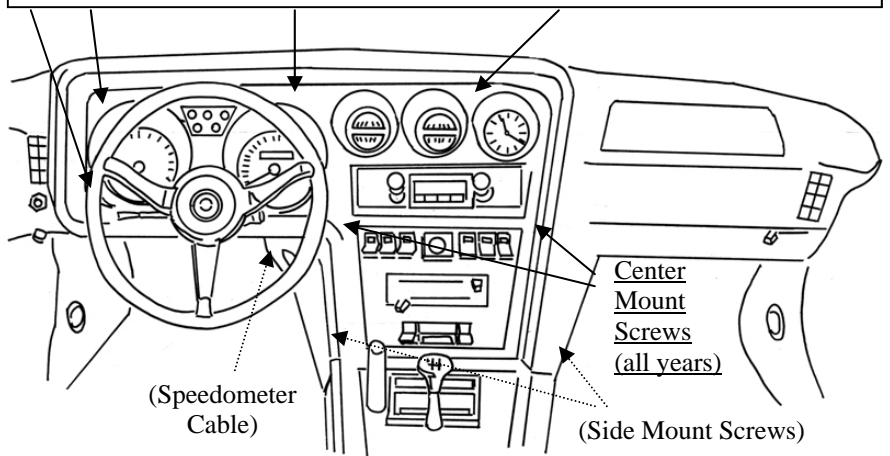


1971-1973 GT:

Had 6 mount screws. Also had "circular" lenses on center 5-warning light panel.



Locations: 4 Upper Mount Pins (1968-70) or 4 Upper Mount Screws (1971-73)



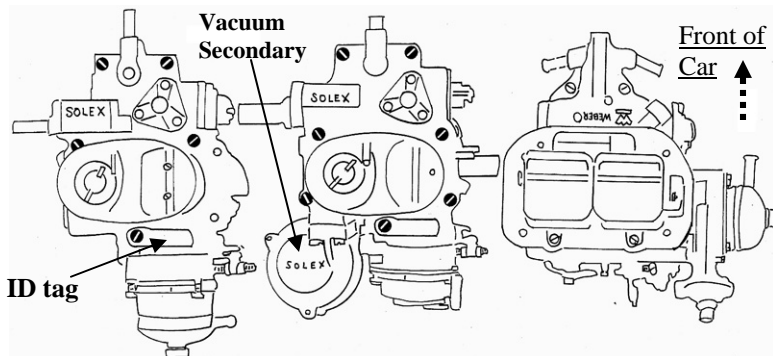
Note: You can interchange the 1968/1970 and 1971-1973 panels, if you change the retainer clips (to match each round-head pin or screw, respectively).

Note: To safely remove the (fragile) gauge panel, do not forget to also remove the side screws and the speedometer cable (also lower the steering column).

Opel Carburetor Style Identification

1.9 Engine Opels originally came with a Solex-brand 32DIDTA carburetor. You can identify which Solex you have, by comparing the number printed on its metal ID tag (located on top of the carb) to the chart below. (Water chokes came on 1968-1972 GT's, and the 1973 GT model was an Electric choke).

Many Solexes have been swapped among models, (including some later Solexes from the Opel Manta, identified by the large round vacuum secondary) but the Weber 32/36 DGEV is the most common replacement carburetor installed on Opels.



1968-1972 GT
Water choke,
5-bolt style

1971-1974 Manta
Electric Choke,
7-bolt style shown

Weber 32/36
Most common
replacement

Opel GT 1.9 Engine Solex Carb Tag #'s

1969 GT/Auto Trans: 3441025
1969 GT/4spd Trans: 3441026
1970 GT/Auto Trans: 3441026B
1970 GT/4spd Trans: 3441025B
1971 GT/Auto Trans: 3441550
1971 GT/4spd Trans: 3441549
1972 GT/Auto Trans: 3441550
1972 GT/4spd Trans: 3441549
1973 GT/Auto Trans: 3441827
1973 GT/4spd Trans: 3441826

Special California-Only GT versions:

1970 GT/Auto Trans (CA): 3441039A
1970 GT/4spd Trans (CA): 3441038A

Opel Kadett 1.9 Engine Solex Carb Tag #'s

1968-69 Kadett/Manual Trans: 2891514
1969 Kadett/Auto Trans: 3441011
1970 Kadett/Manual: 2891514E
1970 Kadett/Auto Trans: 3441011B
1971 Kadett/Manual: 3441547
1971 Kadett/Auto Trans: 3441548
1972 Kadett/Manual: 3441547
1972 Kadett/Auto Trans: 3441548

Special California-Only versions:

1970 Kadett/Manual (CA) 3441037A
1970 Kadett/Auto (CA) 3441044A
1972 Kadett/Manual (CA) 3441593

Opel Manta 1.9 Engine Solex Carb Tag #'s

1971 Manta-1900/Manual: 3441510
1971 Manta-1900/Auto: 3441511
1972 Manta-1900/Manual: 3441510
1972 Manta-1900/Auto: 3441511
1973 Manta-1900/Manual: 3441825
1973 Manta-1900/Auto: 3441596
1974 Manta-1900/Manual: 3441834
1974 Manta-1900/Auto: 3441835

Special California-Only versions:

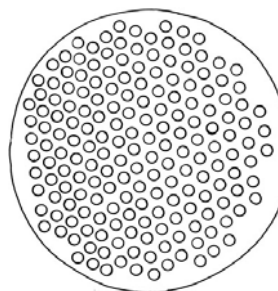
1972 Manta-1900/Manual (CA) 3441595
1974 Manta-1900/Manual (CA) 3441836
1974 Manta-1900/Auto: (CA) 3441837

Original Opel GT Air Filter Housings

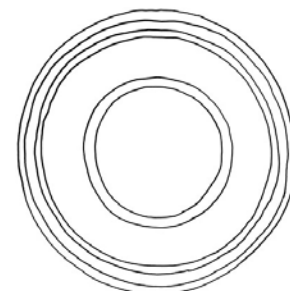
A required inspection is the underside of the top lid of the GT Air Filter Housing.

1968-1970 GT's originally had an oil bath air cleaner (a lid with many holes, filled with a straw-like material) which requires modification to use aftermarket round air filters.

Later 1971-1973 lids had a large round recessed area, and is the only style that can be used "as is" with modern round air filter elements.



1968-1970



1971-1973

Taillight Styles

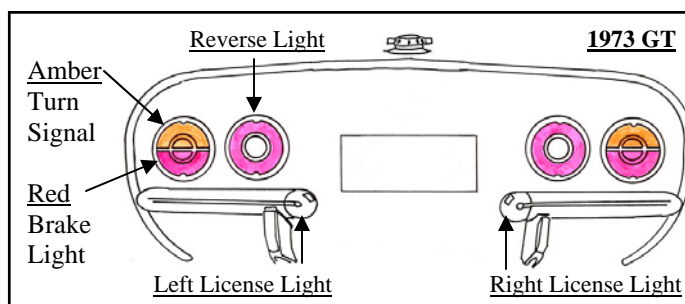
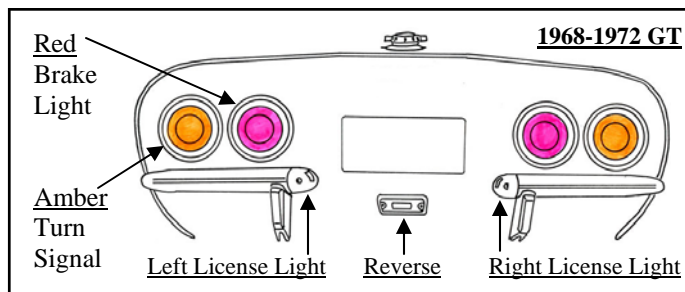
There were two different styles of rear taillights originally installed on Opel GT's, that are incompatible with each other. (Changes started at VIN# OYONC-3100996)

1968-1972 Opel GT's (produced before Dec 31, 1972) Had a simple style: One amber (orange) and one red, per side. The reverse/backup light was below the license plate.

1973 Opel GT's (produced after Jan 1, 1973) changed. A "split" amber (orange) and red lens (combined turn signal/brake), and a red lens with a white center (for a reverse light).

The rear lights were the same as used on the Opel Manta models (but mounting screws were substituted on the GT, for the Manta's mount bolts).

(License plate & emblems, are not shown in image at right)



Original Opel GT Wheel Styles

1968-1970 Opel GT's had a "4 rectangle" style rim, with an outer trim ring and a 6 3/4" center lug nut cap.

1971-1972 Opel GT's had a "15-hole" style rim, with an outer trim ring and a 6 3/4" center lug nut cap.

1973 GT's had a "cross" pattern, and a small 2 3/4" cap.

As later GT styles were also used on the Manta, verify that your wheel is stamped "GT" or measure its backspacing (GT = ET25(~4 1/16") and the Manta = ET37(~4 7/16"))



1968-1970

1971-1972

1973

GT Lower Control Arm "Inner Sleeve"

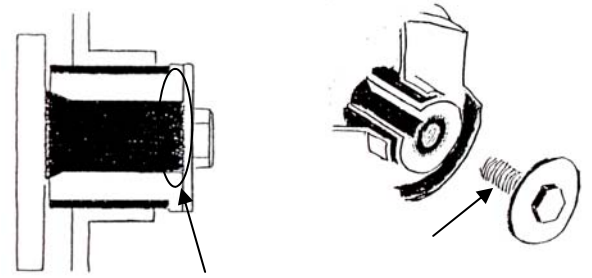
The outer diameter of this metal sleeve changed in 1972. Because many suspensions have been altered, you should remove the outer bolt/washer, then use a precision caliper tool and measure your existing sleeve. Knowing your size, is necessary to order the correct size of matching replacement polyurethane bushings.

Early 1968-1971 sleeves

Measure .710" outer diameter

Later 1972-1973 sleeves

Measure .745" outer diameter



Measure at thin outer edge of sleeve

Remove bolt to access inner sleeve

GT Steering Rack/Inner Tie Rod

The lengths of the inner tie rods, and the steering rack changed in 1969 (after GT chassis #94-2076162).

Because many parts have been swapped, when replacing the inner tie rod you should check the dimensions of the rack and inner tie rod (in case you have an early 1969 rack).

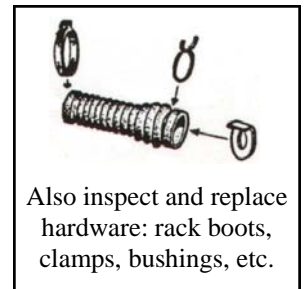
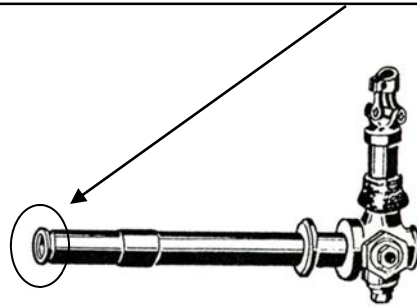
Early 1968-69 Inner Tie Rods = 251.5mm long (and have smaller @12mm threads into the rack)

Later 1969-1973 Inner Tie Rods = 239 mm long (and have larger 14mm threads into the rack)

Later rack shafts are 20 1/4" (measured end-to-end), Early rack shafts appear to be about 1/2" shorter



Note: Inner Tie Rod replacement, uses 16mm and 18mm wrenches, and also requires careful removal of a lock washer (22mm wide, 15mm hole, 1mm thick).



Also inspect and replace hardware: rack boots, clamps, bushings, etc.

GT Rear Upper Spring Hats

Opel changed the width, where the upper spring hat of the rear coil spring met the underside of the rear GT body, in 1970.

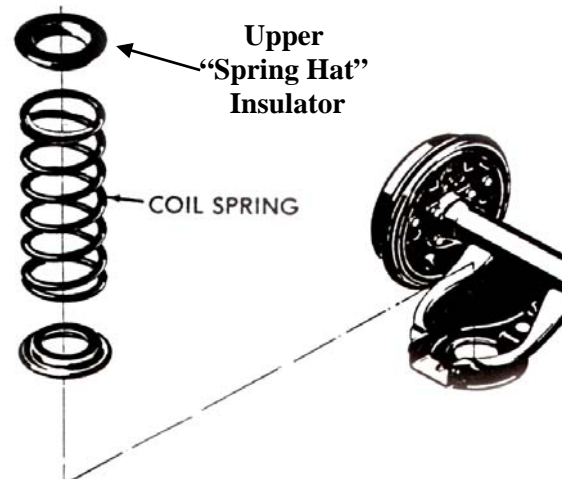
It's not the easiest area to access (generally the body has to be lifted until the coil spring is loose and can be removed), but it's a necessary measurement (particularly for mid-year 1970 GT's) if you want to replace the "spring hat" insulators (which is a good idea, since the original rubber insulators are now over 30 years old).

Early 1968-1970 GT's

Had a tapered metal ring that measured about 2 7/8" to 3" wide.

Later 1970-1973 GT's

Had a tapered metal ring that measured 3 3/8" to 3 1/2" wide.



Rear Axle Design

Major internal changes occurred after the 1970 model year Opel. Many owners have changed rear axles since then, so you need to inspect the axle (at the rear brake backing plates, working around the axle shaft tubes) to identify the design you have.

Early 1968-1970 Axles:

These can be identified by the 10mm “narrower” lower bolt measurement (**the top 2 bolts which have outer edges that measure 85mm apart, compared to the outer edges of the lower 2 bolts that measure 75mm apart). These axles have weaker “c-clip” shaft retainers and use side shaft bearings that are either very expensive or unavailable as replacement parts.

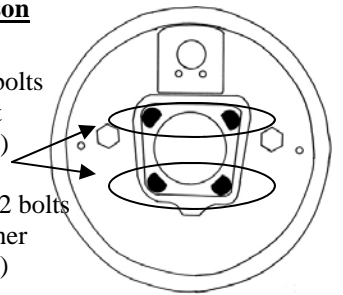
Later 1971-1973 Axles:

These can be identified by the equal distance between all the bolts. (Outer edges of the bolts, measure 85mm apart from each other). These axles have slide-in side axles, and the axle hardware (bearings, Retainers, o-ring seals) are more available than the early style axles.

Axle Comparison

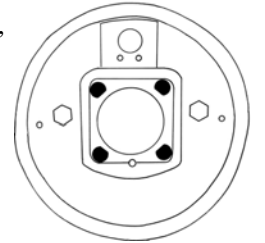
“Early” Axles:

Edges of top 2 bolts are further apart (about 85mm**) and the edges of lower 2 bolts are closer together (about 75mm**)



“Late” Axles:

All 4 bolts are “square” or equally-distanced (85mm at outer edges) from each other



(Viewed at rear brake backing plates)

Manual Transmission Design

Important changes affect speedometer accuracy, reverse light switch location, speedometer cable gear designs, clutch return spring lengths, and other operational requirements. More details are in the March/April 2008 Blitz.

Manual Transmission Comparison (Underside views, driver’s side is at top of images)

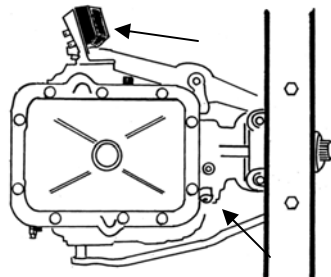
Early Style 1968-1970:

Reverse Switch:

Mounts on bracket on driver’s side

Speedo Cable:

Connects to Angle Drive to gear on Passenger side



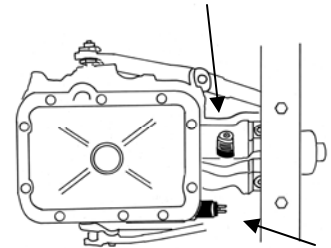
Later Style 1971-1973:

Reverse Switch:

Screws into rear on passenger side

Speedo Cable:

Connects to Driver’s Side



Rear Brake Shoe Lever

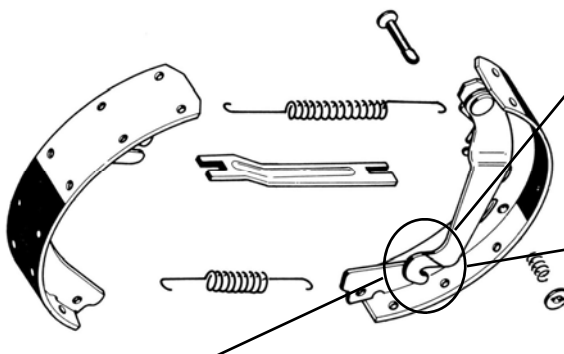
You need to remove your rear brake drums and identify your “type” of brake shoe lever (and parking brake cable end) to order and install matching parts. In some cases, you may have to swap over your existing levers onto a set of replacement shoes (or maybe even change an e-brake cable to match the shoe type you have, or are able to purchase).

“Early” Style:

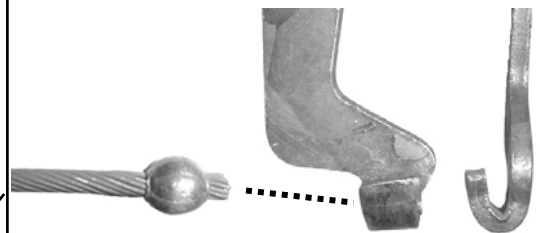
Folded Lever brake shoes with “Ball end” emergency brake cables were originally installed on all model 1968 to mid-year 1972 Opels.

“Later” Style:

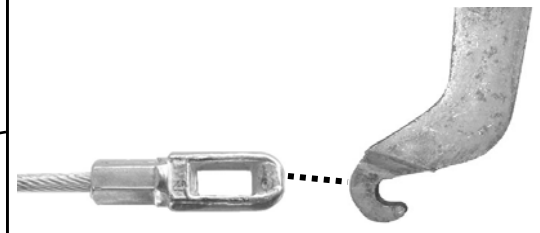
Hook Lever brake shoes with *Stirrup-end* emergency brake cables were installed on all models of Opels from Mid-year 1972 through 1975.



Typical Folded Lever Brake Shoe (& Ball-End cable) from 1968-1972



Typical Hook Lever Brake Shoe (& Stirrup-End cable) from 1972-1975



Area to Inspect:

Remove your brake drums, and check where the parking brake/emergency brake cable end meets the lever on your rear brake shoes.

OPEL MOTORSPORTS CLUB

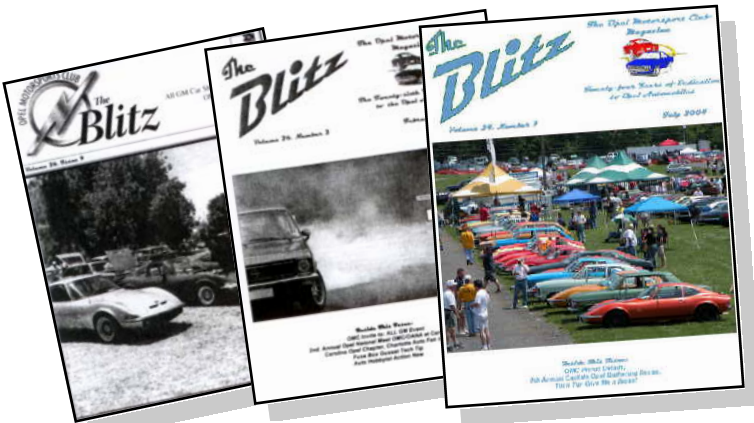
OMC is an independent US-based auto club, that specializes in German-made 1968-1975 Opels.

OMC was founded in 1980 by Opel enthusiasts who wanted to share information and promote their marque in motorsports. A newsletter was established to promote Opel events, report Opel-related news, provide technical tips, discuss vehicle upgrades, and give members a free place to advertise.



New "Full Memberships" receive:

A year of bi-monthly print issues of OMC newsletter "The Blitz," a roster of club members, an OMC decal and a window emblem. Members can also participate in local OMC chapter activities, held all over the USA.



OMC Newsletters: "THE BLITZ"

(Print version black/white; Online in color)

OMC Activities & Annual Meeting

Opel Motorsport Club is the longest-established Opel club in the U.S.A. Members travel great distances to attend the OMC Annual Meeting, a mid-Summer gathering and display of classic and restored Opels. Benefits of membership also include information from other Opel owners on the maintenance and improvement of their Opel(s), and the ability to contact fellow members on their common interests.

Opel Motorsport Club funds help maintain our website (with helpful Opel information) at: www.opelclub.com

OMC's peer-reviewed technical information helps owners avoid common and costly errors on Opel repair jobs! OMC is officially recognized by the Opel factory of Russelsheim, Germany, and OMC "SOLO II" racing activities are also sanctioned by the SCCA (Sports Car Club of America) for racing nationwide in the USA.

"Full" U.S. Membership: \$45.00 (Includes bi-monthly b/w print issues of The Blitz, postage & benefits listed above)

"Online-Only" Member: \$20.00 (Includes downloadable Acrobat .pdf version of The Blitz, for home color printing)



To Join: Send your name & address, with check/money order payable to "Opel Motorsports Club" by mail to:
OMC Treasurer, 3824 Franklin Street, La Crescenta CA 91214-1607

*OR: Send \$47 for Full US Membership or \$22 for Online Membership,
via PayPal to: JoinOMC@opelclub.com*

(International Members: Please Add \$10. for Full Membership, to cover additional postage costs)

