

96 A6 Tailgate Vacuum Lock Leak Fix

When you start to hear the leaking vacuum sound in the tailgate lock area and it takes time for it to lock or unlock, you have a crack on the vacuum boot and it will get bigger and one day it doesn't lock or unlock any more. If you go to the dealer, they will tell you that they only sell the whole unit for \$175 as in my dealer (July, 2006). Well, even I have the money to buy the unit, but I'm not going to pay \$175 for the flimsy rubber boot, I tried to fix it and I think this way worked for me because by the time this procedure is written, it's been working for over a week with hundreds actuations.

Removing panels:



Remove top moldings:



*** Pry them out slowly and carefully, you need to put some force into it*****

Removing Side moldings:



***** Pull these two sidemoldings out toward inside direction, wiggle and it does need some force.

Remove main panel:

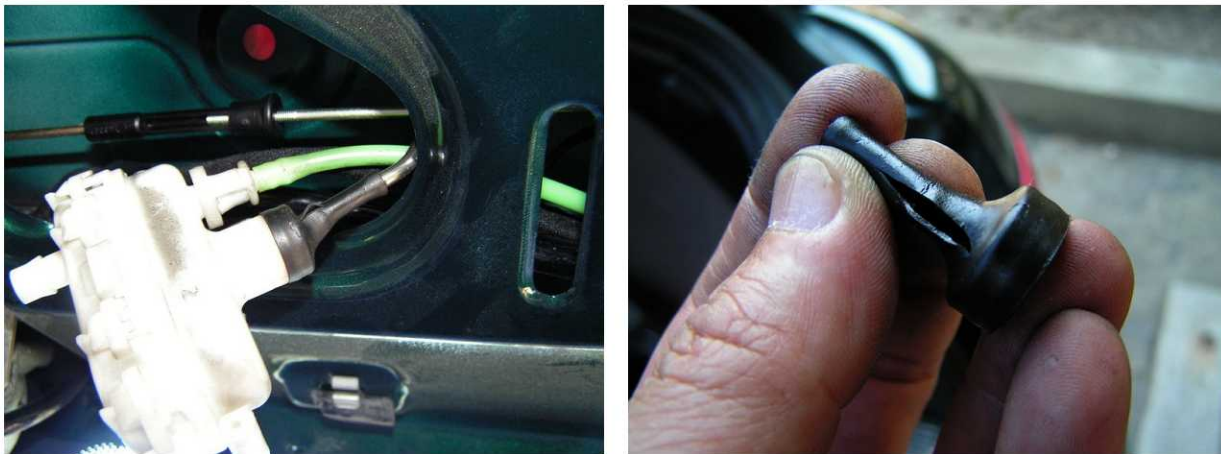
Pull panel down and out of the snap-on pins slowly and carefully



*When removing middle clips, be careful not to break it. Use a long screw driver to pry up***
* SLIDE THE PANEL UPWARD and TAKE IT OUT.

Removing the lock vacuum unit:

The vacuum unit is on the right side when the gate is up, remove the 2 screws and unhook the rod and slide it out.



Take out the unit:

***** Carefully remove the lock on the vacuum hose connector and it will slide right out *****
I used 2 little screw drivers on each side and pry it out simultaneously.

The FIX:



Rubber cement and balloons. Use medium balloons with openings are just about the size of the boot. Apply rubber cement evenly all over the outside of the boot and then pull the cutout balloon over the boot as the picture shown, twist the balloon to make sure it's bond to the boot as much as possible.

When the cement and balloon settled to the boot, apply another coat of cement outside the balloon and pull 1 more balloon over the first one and twist the balloon again to make sure this balloon bonded to the first one. BE CAREFUL NOT TO SCRATCH or TEAR THE BALLOON due to LONG FINGER NAILS, CUT THEM before doing this (ask me how I know...☺)



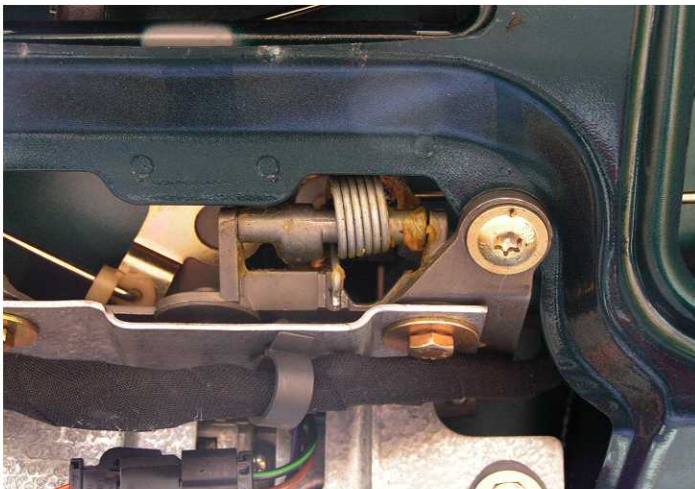
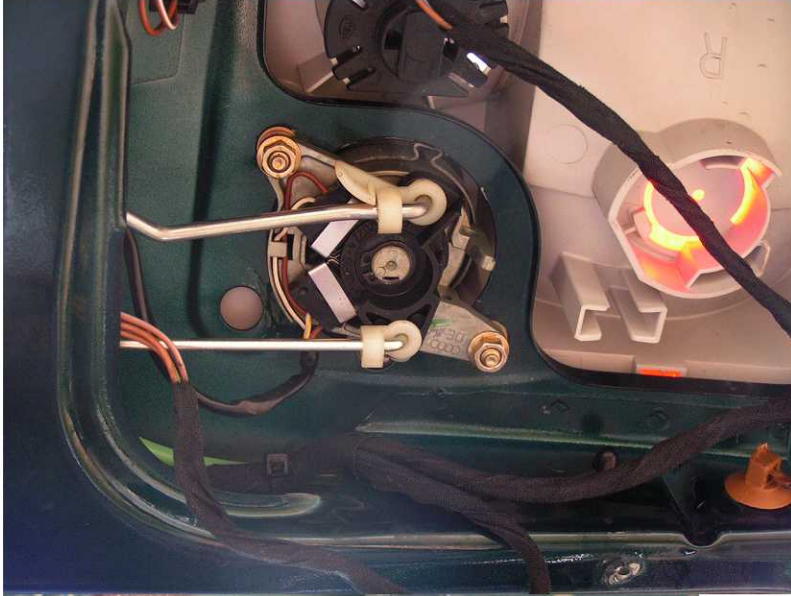
Tie wrapped both ends and wait for it to dry. I put some oil outside the final balloon because the balloon is very thin and sticky, when the pump actuated, it may get stuck. To be safe, I also pull another balloon over this one but not glue or tie wrap at all.

Put the vacuum unit back in the car and test by lock and unlock door to see if it leaks, if you do it right, it will not leak, but the in/out movements will be less than before due to thicker layers of balloons. It may lock but will not unlock, I have to adjust the rod that releases/locks the mechanical lock. To adjust, release the rod from the holder, turn the rod counterclockwise if you want to extend the length and vice versa.

You can look under the handle and you can see if the handle starts to catch the lock mechanism, when it starts to catch, then turn a few more turns then retest the whole thing.

This is the way I did mine and it worked. It cost me a few trials and errors, but I like it. It's not that I can't afford the \$175, it's the fun of solving problem. You can use this if you like, but you're responsible to your work and like I said, it's working for over a week now.

Cheers and hope your Audi runs well,



You can see the latch at the end of the rod, follow it to the handle.