

Aftermarket Seat Heater Installation for Mercedes-Benz C32 AMG

This repair is to fix the bottom (butt) pad, which tends to break on these cars. My backrest heat was working fine, and my dash light was working fine. Dealer wanted \$750 per seat to swap out the leather pads with new ones, but they would just break again anyway, so I fixed myself. Cost: \$70 for the seat heater kit, plus \$7 for a Torx 45 bit.

1. Order some aftermarket heated seat elements. These usually come in a kit with all sorts of extra wires, a switch, etc. All you really need is the heater pads, though – the rest of that stuff is for cars not already wired for heated seats. I ordered Champion brand Dual Setting Universal Carbon Fiber Seat Heaters, as they seemed to be the largest, and were carbon fiber, which I hear has several advantages.
2. Lower headrests on seat as far as possible. This will help you later get seats out of the car.
3. Move seat all the way forward, and up. The “up” will help you later with seat cover removal/install.
4. Remove 2 rear bolts which hold seat to floor, using a 10mm Torx socket.
5. Remove seat side trim, by pulling off plastic cover at seatbelt attachment point, then using a size 45 Torx bit on a socket to remove the bolt, which leaves the cover loose and the seatbelt dangling from the B-pillar.
6. Move seat all the way back.
7. Disconnect battery negative terminal, using 10mm socket (non-Torx).
8. Remove 2 front bolts which hold seat to floor, using a 10mm Torx socket.
9. Unclip all electrical harnesses.
 - a. This is easier said than done. I found it fairly easy on the driver’s side, but on the passenger side there were 2 small, cheap, yellow plastic harnesses that I couldn’t get undone. I broke one using a long-nose pliers, so be careful! As a result, I was forced to install the heater for the passenger side without removing the seat from the car. This is harder and not ideal, especially if you’ve never done this repair before. Luckily, I had just done the driver’s side, so knew the tricks.
10. Carefully remove seat, being sure not to scratch the interior of the car, as bottom of seat has sharp edges.
11. Place seat on a table, upside down, with backrest hanging down off the table.
12. Look at bottom of seat, where it attaches to the leather. As you can see, the leather is folded over itself and sewn into a piece of ½ thick plastic. Then there are metal clips every ~3 inches which clip the leather seat to the seat metal. If you can get any of the seat off, it will all be able to come off in succession. I suggest starting at a front corner. Use a long-nose pliers on the clip that is on a side of the seat closest to the front of the seat. I basically just pull that clip off with the pliers. Can re-install later, or can forget it, since there are plenty of other clips. Once that clip is off, use your fingers to pull down on the leather trim. Work your way around, popping it off, but don’t take it off in the back.

13. Fold seat cover over, revealing foam. You will see what looks like a channel with a thin metal rod wire in it, attached to a white plastic clip. There are 6 of these in the seat; 3 per side. The channel/rod runs from front to back of the seat, at the seam where the seat edge meets the main flat seat butt pad.
14. Use a long-nose plier to gently grab the plastic clips. If you twist the clip about 90 degrees, you'll see how it can pop out of its grip on the wire it is clipped to. Do this to unclip 4 clips: the front and middle on left and right side of the seat.
15. You will now be able to lift the leather pad up. You will see a black wire protruding out the bottom, in the center of the pad. This wire connects the old heating pad to power.
16. Cut the wire close to the where it enters the leather pad. Seal off the connection at the pad with electrical tape or similar.
17. You now have a loose wire which is running to the seat. If you look closely, you will see that it is in fact 2 wires wrapped in a black sheath. Cut away an inch or so of the sheath, being careful not to cut into the wires below.
18. Strip ½ inch of the blue and ½ inch of the brown wire you find underneath. I believe the blue is power, and the brown is ground.
19. Take your aftermarket heating pad out and lay it on top of the foam / below the leather pad. The leather pad is attached to about 1/3 inch of foam. When you lift that pad/foam, there is much thicker/firmer foam below it. You want to lay your heated seat elements in between the leather/foam unit and the thick foam below. Get it nice and flat, then remove the adhesive backing. You don't want any kinks in the material. The adhesive should face down, not up.
20. On the elements I bought, the wires ran out the front by where your knees would be if sitting in the seat. Cut a thin channel in the foam on the front of the seat for the wire to go into. Feed the wire down through the hole the old wire came up. Try to make sure the wire won't rub on the seats / metal, as this could lead to a short / fire.
21. Solder or use butt clips to attach the blue wire from the car to the red wire on the element, and the brown wire from the car to the black wire on the element. Cover with electrical tape as back-up.
22. Find a good spot where the extra wire won't bind or get caught when the power seat moves around. I suggest using some pull-ties to attach the wires to the bottom of the seat to help in this goal / keep them out of the way.
23. Reverse process to re-install seat. Make sure not to attach battery before you connect all the wiring harness on the bottom of the seat.

This solution does take several minutes (5?) for the butt pad to get warm, but once it warms up it works fine, and is much better than going without heated seats in the winter. Bare leather = cold.