

" THIS ARTICLE IS INTENDED FOR YOUR REFERENCE ONLY.

ACTUAL PARTS, YEARS AND BODY STYLES CONTAINED

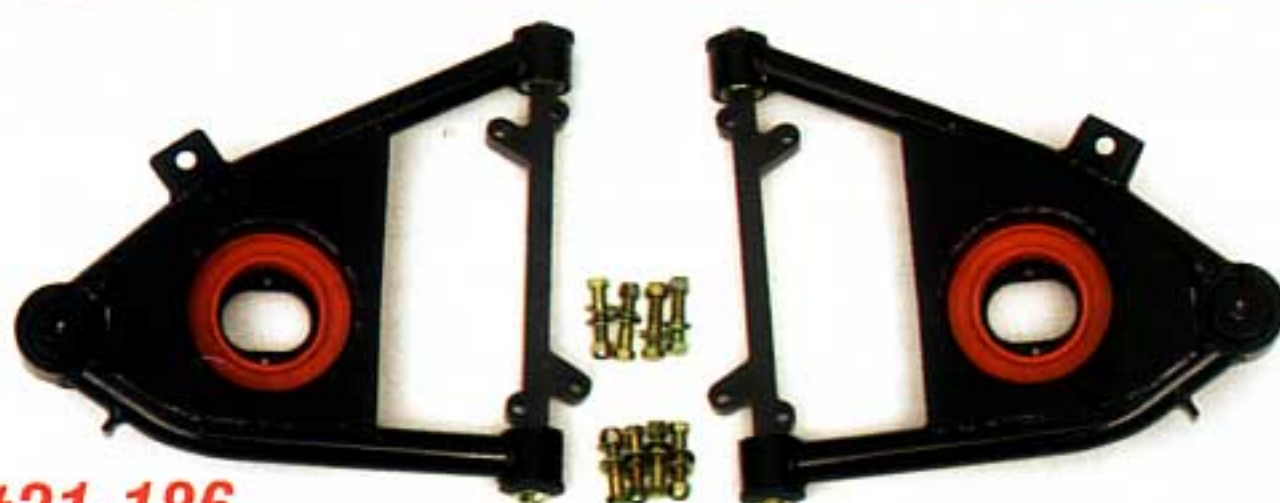
IN THIS ARTICLE MAY DIFFER SLIGHTLY FROM YOUR APPLICATION. "

YOU CAN DO IT EASY UPGRADES

1955-57 UPPER AND LOWER TUBULAR CONTROL ARM INSTALLATION UPDATE

#21-185

by Randy Irwin



#21-186

Why install tubular upper and lower control arms? If your classic has stock steering and brakes, there may be no reason other than the custom look and additional strength of tubular control arms. If your car is equipped with an updated steering system like a 605, 670 or rack & pinion, you have a major reason to consider tubular upper and lower control arms. With an updated power steering system, additional positive caster must be added when adjusting the front end in order for the steering to perform at its best. If too little caster is used, the steering will feel very sensitive and the car will tend to "dart" from side-to-side. With stock upper control arms and a 50-year old frame, the additional caster needed can rarely be obtained using stock upper control arms. These new tubular upper arms provide 1 degree more camber and 5 degrees more caster. In addition, the tubular lower control arms feature a built-in anti-sway bar tab to make installation even cleaner. The ball joints are pre-installed and the arms are powder coated gloss black. With 5-degrees more caster built right in to the tubular upper arms, there will never be a problem getting the front end aligned properly!

Parts Needed:

- 21-185 Tubular Upper Control Arms
- 21-186 Tubular Lower Control Arms
- 21-187 Upper & Lower Control Arms
- 21-26 Upper A-arm Bumper
- 21-57 Front Gas Charged Shock

Tools Needed:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Ball Joint Splitter | 11/16" Wrench |
| Coil Spring Compressor | 7/8" Wrench |
| Floor Jack | 1/2" Socket |
| Jack Stands | 9/16" Socket |
| 1/2" Wrench | Ratchet |
| 3/4" Wrench | |

Time Frame:

6 Hours

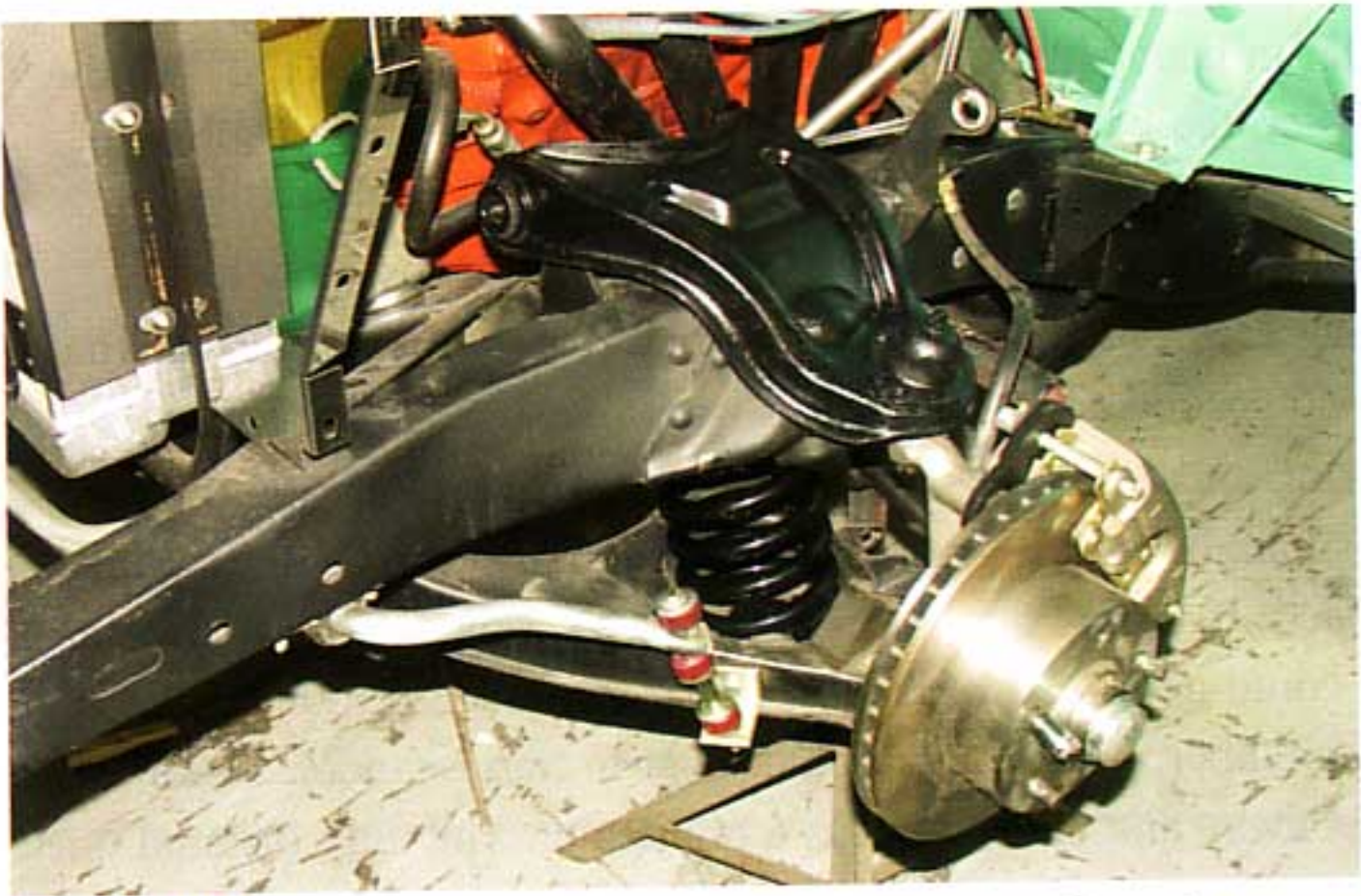


Photo #1: The original upper control arms attach to the upper frame crossmember with two 7/16" studs and nuts. The lowers attach to the frame with four 7/16" X 1-1/4" bolts and nuts. The shock absorber bolts to the lower arm with two 5/16" bolts and attaches to the upper frame with one 3/8" fine thread nut.

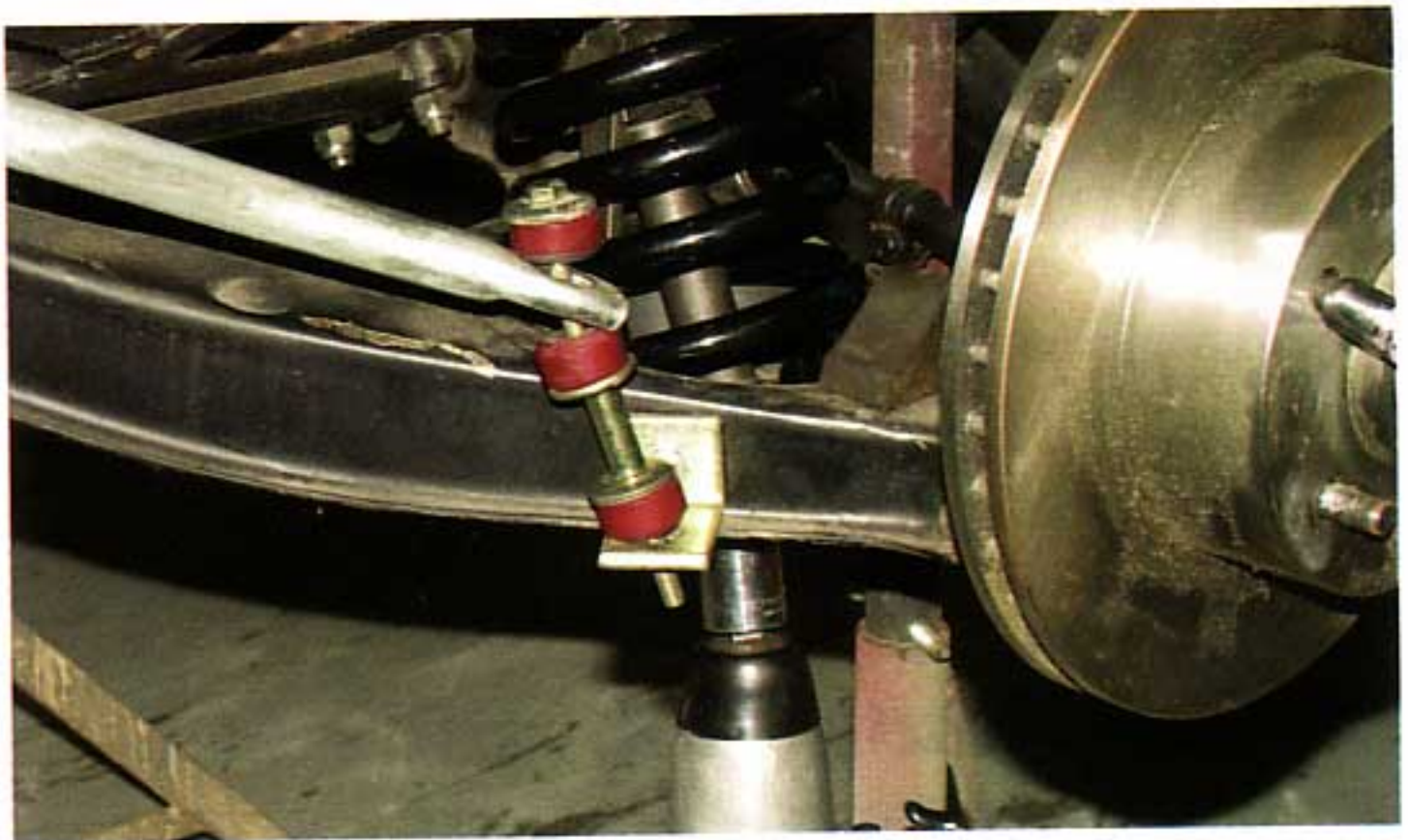


Photo #2: With the shock absorber removed and the sway bar end link loose, feed a coil spring compressor up through the lower control arm. Connect the spring compressor to the spring and tighten the compressor down to take the load off the control arms.



Photo 3a



Photo 3b

Photo #3a & 3b: Remove the cotter pins and nuts from the upper and lower ball joints. Using a ball joint splitter, remove the spindle from the control arms.

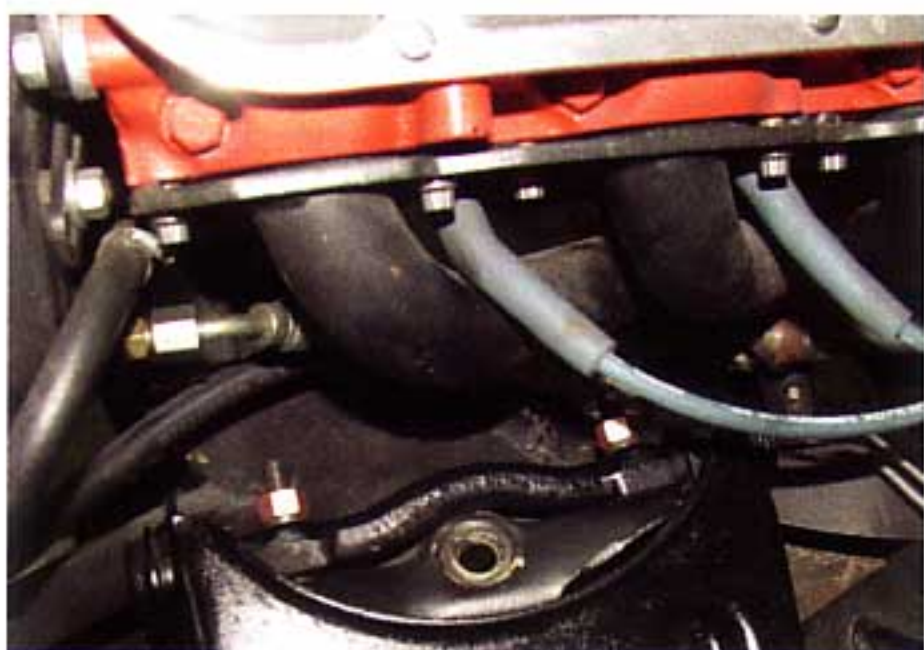


Photo #4a & 4b: The upper control arm attaches to the upper frame with two 7/16" studs and tall nuts. The lower a-arm attaches to the frame with (4) 7/16" bolts and nuts.

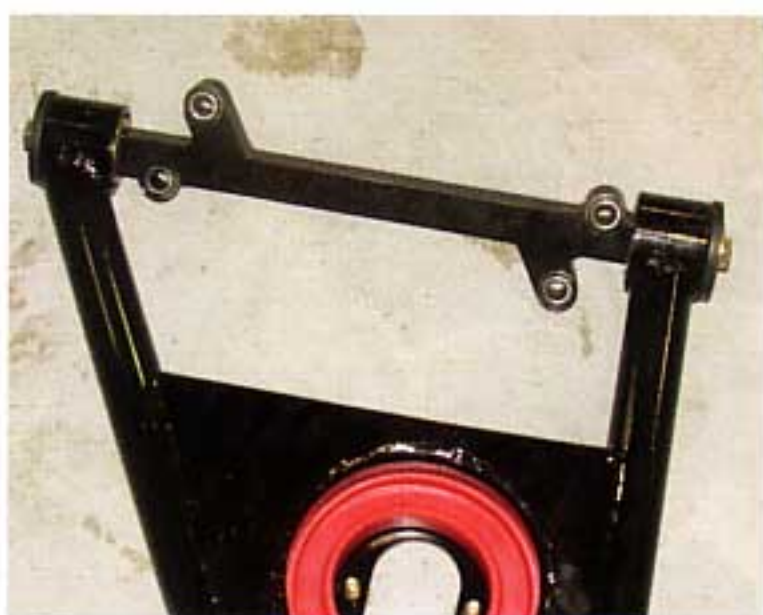


Photo #5a & 5b: The new lower control arm includes all new mounting hardware. The bolts pass through the frame from the top. Unlike other control arms, these include new billet cross shafts, urethane bushings and are gloss black powder coated. Install the arms to the frame and torque the nuts to 75 ft/lbs.

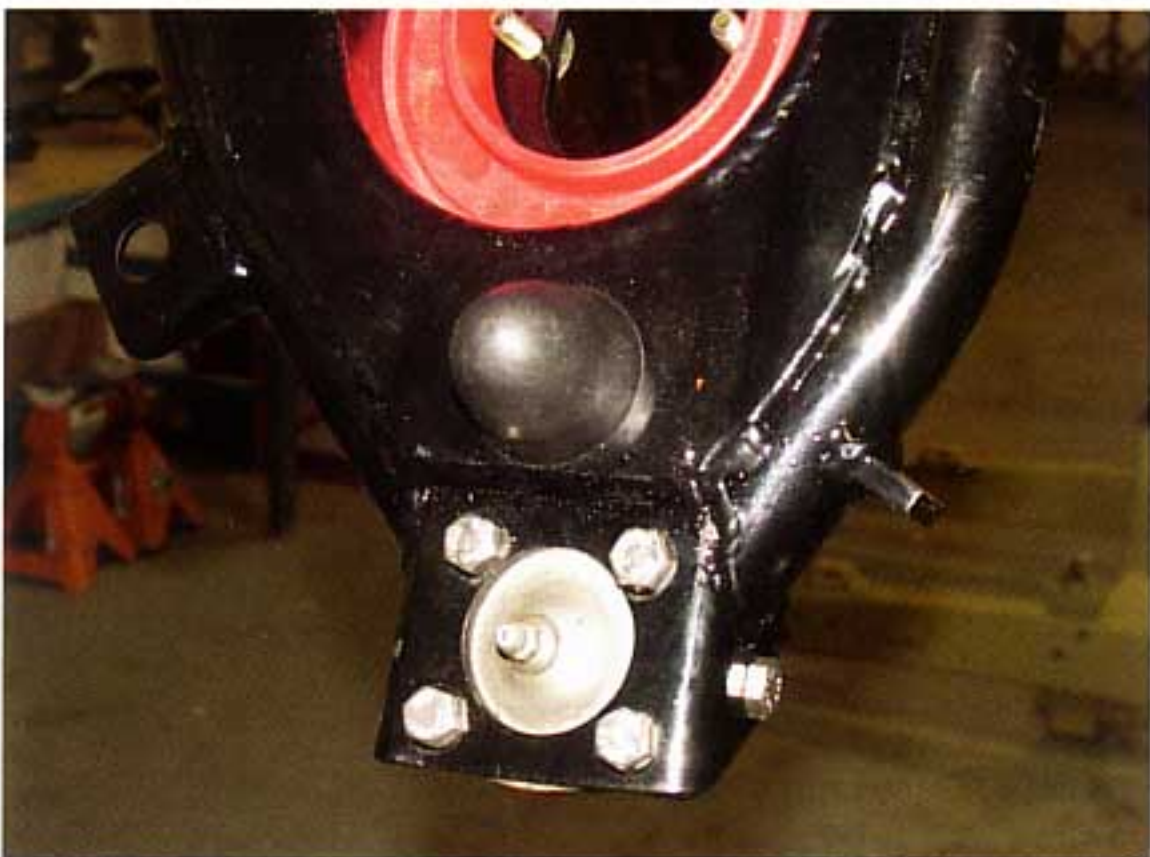


Photo #6: These arms are equipped with new ball joints that allow you to use stock spindles as well as any available dropped spindle design.



Photo #7: Compress the coil spring for ease of installation. We will install a 2" drop front coil spring #21-133. This 2" drop spring has an 80 lb higher rating than the

stock spring so with car lowered, the car will handle well and will align properly. The spring is designed for a car with a small or big block engine with or without air conditioning.

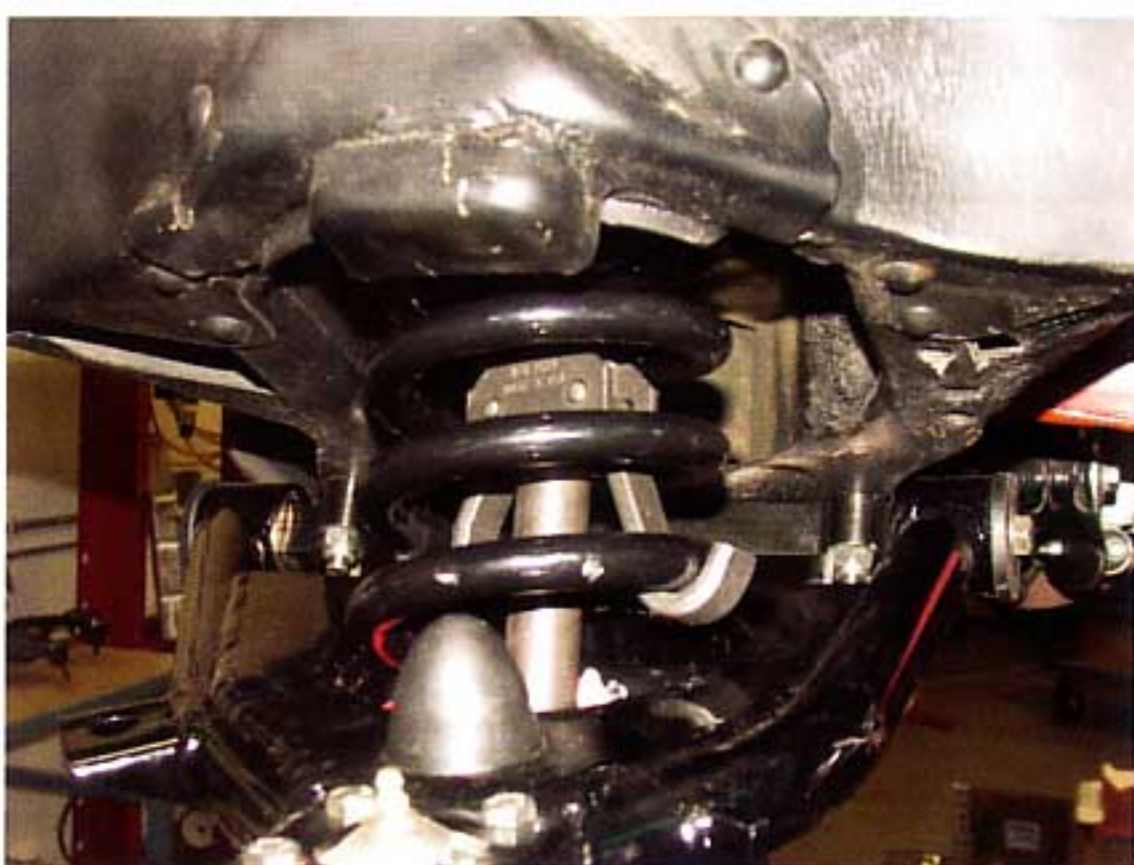


Photo #8:

Place the spring in the pocket in the lower control arm and raise it into place. Make sure the top end of the spring is seated properly in the upper spring pocket.

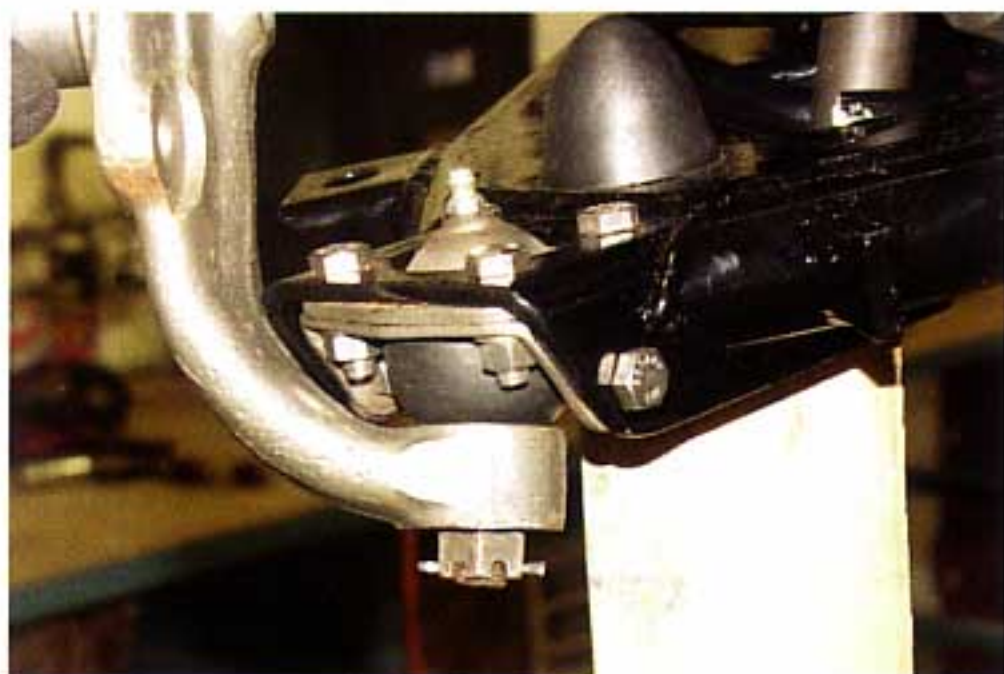


Photo #9: With the new lower arm in place, attach the spindle to the lower ball joint and torque the ball joint nut to 55 ft/lbs. Install a new cotter pin.



Photo #10: Install the new upper control arm with no alignment shims. The front end will have to be realigned by a local alignment shop. Torque the upper control arm mounting nuts to 65 ft/lbs.

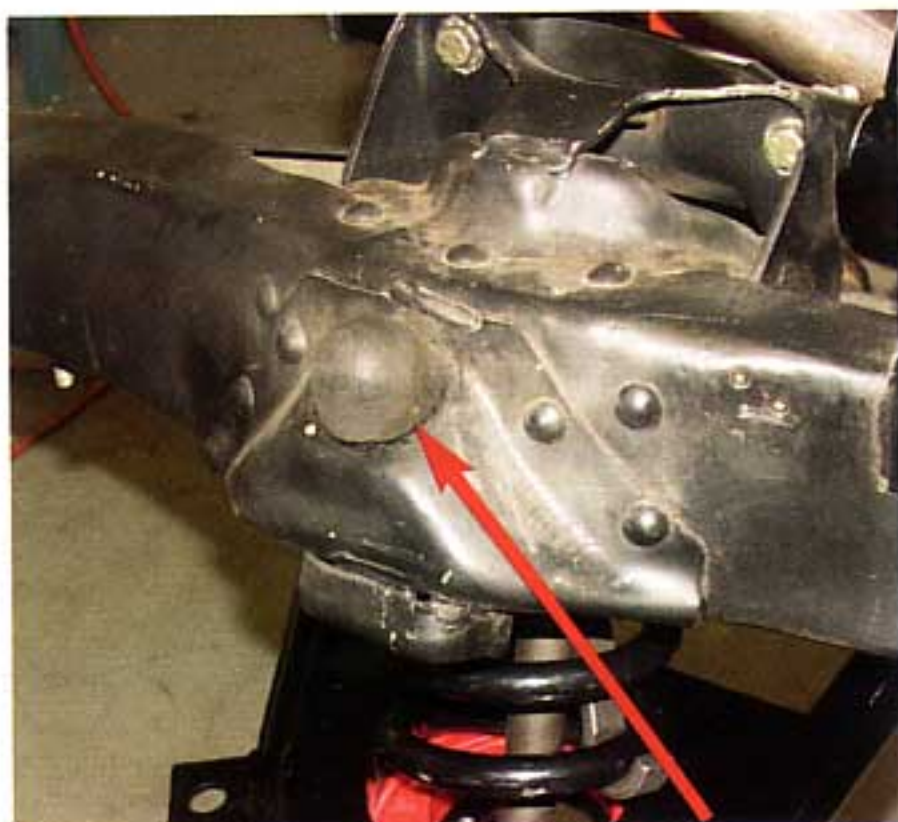


Photo #11: Before attaching the new upper ball joint to the top of the spindle, be sure the upper arm bumper is in good shape. If it needs to be replaced, use #21-26. It snaps into a hole in the frame just under the upper control arm.

Photo #12: The upper ball joints use a lock nut that is supplied with the new upper arm. Attach the spindle to the ball joint and torque the nut to 45 ft/lbs.

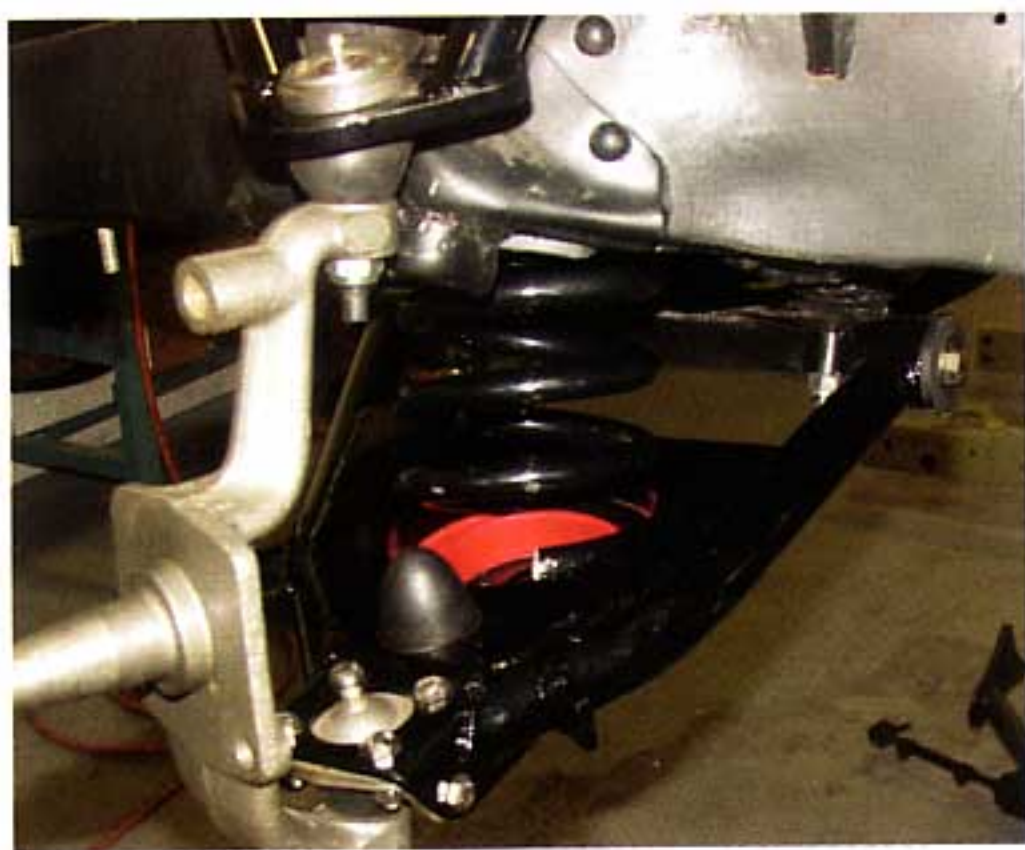


Photo #13: Once both ball joints are attached to the spindle, the coil spring compressor can be removed by passing it down through the hole in the lower control arm.



Photo #14: We have decided to install the KYB gas charged front shock absorbers #21-57 for improved ride and handling. Install one cupped washer and one rubber grommet onto the threaded (top) end of the shock absorber.

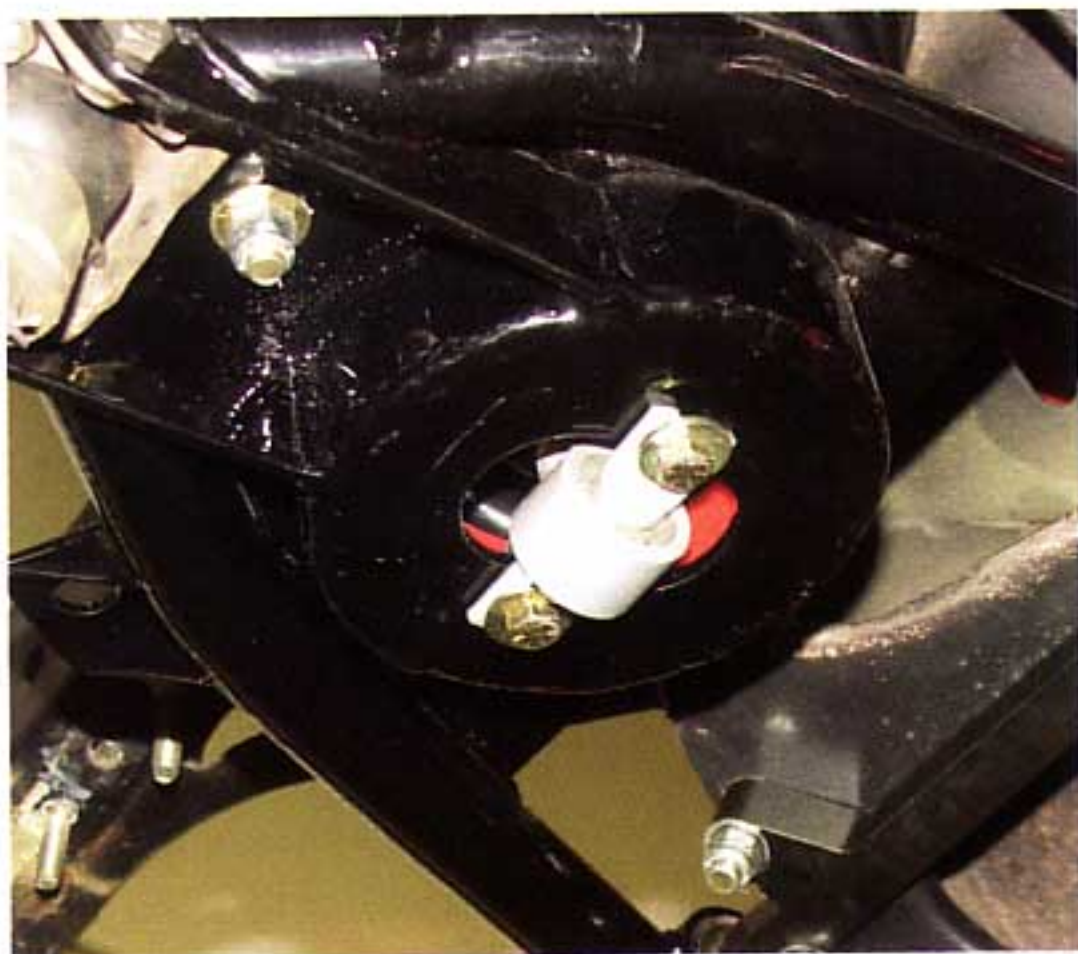


Photo #15:

The bottom of the shock absorber bolts to the lower coil spring plate with two 5/16" X 1" bolts supplied with the new lower arm.



Photo #16: The threaded end of the shock absorber passes through the hole in the upper frame. Install one rubber grommet, a cupped washer, the standard size 3/8" nut and the 3/8" jam nut.

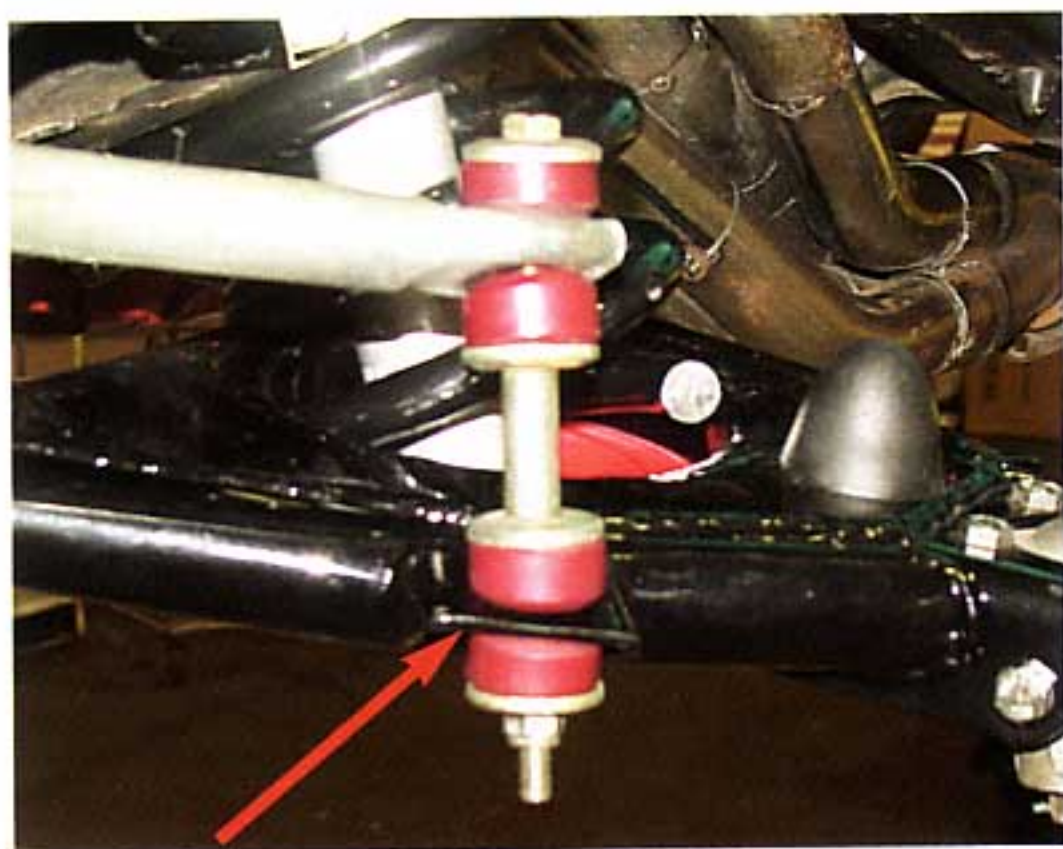


Photo #17: Note the new lower control arm already has a tab welded to the forward side in the correct location for the sway bar link. Drive your car to the local alignment shop and follow the proper specs for your steering and brake types. Good luck! 