

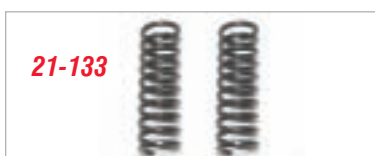
1955-57 UPPER TUBULAR CONTROL ARMS, FRONT LOWERING COIL SPRINGS & COIL SPRING COMPRESSOR TOOL



Randy Irwin - Technical Writer

Randy has been involved in the Chevy parts business for over 25 years. He is a wizard at creating, making and modifying custom parts for Chevys.

After installing the rack and pinion on our car with the stock upper control arms, we could not achieve enough positive caster at the front end alignment shop. Additional caster (moving the upper ball joint rearward) is always necessary after installing any type of aftermarket power steering on a '55-'57. In this article, we will install the NEW Eckler's Classic Chevy upper tubular control arms along with a pair of 2" lowering springs. The control arms are powder coated gloss black and can be used with stock or dropped spindles. The design of our tubular upper and lower control arms have been improved and are easier to install. The control arms include new ball joints, new control arm bushings and aluminum cross shafts. In addition, we decided to tackle the age-old problem of coil spring compressors. All aftermarket coil spring compressors fail to work well in the tight confines of a tri-five front suspension. We have designed and now offer a super strong, super easy to use coil spring compressor that will make working on your front end a breeze.



Parts Needed:

- 21-185 1955-57 Upper Tubular Control Arms w/Ball Joints
- 21-186 1955-57 Lower Tubular Control Arms w/Ball Joints
- 21-187 1955-57 Upper & Lower Tubular Control Arms w/Ball Joints
- 21-133 1955-57 2" Lowering Coil Springs
- 49-240 Coil Spring Compressor Tool
- 49-62 Front End Fork Tool Set

To order parts call 1-800-456-1957 or visit ClassicChevy.com

Tools Needed:

- 1/2" Wrench
- 11/16" Wrench
- 3/8" Allen
- Ball Joint Fork
- Tie Rod End Fork

Time Frame:

6 Hours



Photo #1a & 1b: First, remove the front shock absorber. The stud on the shock absorber is attached to the upper control arm stand with a 9/16" nut, cupped washer and rubber grommet.

Photo #2: The lower shock absorber tee attaches to the lower control arm with two 5/16" bolts. With the bolts removed, the shock will drop out of the bottom of the control arm.



Photo #3a & 3b: If the upper control arms only are going to be changed, the brakes, steering and anti-sway bar can stay intact. Our customer wants lowering coil springs **P/N 21-133** installed so all of these parts will need to be removed from the spindle. The anti-sway bar is connected the lower control arm with a 5/16" bolt, nut, bushings and washers.



Photo #4a & 4b: If the car has disc brakes, just remove the caliper and place it out of the way. If the car has drum brakes, the brake hose at the frame will need to be disconnected from the frame line. Using a tie rod end pickle fork tool, disconnect the outer tie rod end from the steering arm.



Photo #5a & 5b & 5c & 5d: If you have ever changed front coil springs on an early Chevy and you tried to use the standard hook type coil spring compressor, you know how difficult it is to fish the compressor up through the hole in the lower control arm. When using the hook type compressor, you will always scratch the coil springs. In addition, this type of compressor does not have enough travel to fully take the load off the coils so they are safe to remove. Eckler's Classic Chevy has developed a coil spring compressor **P/N 49-240** that makes changing the front coil springs a breeze. The new compressor attaches to the outside bottom of the lower control arm and to the upper control arm stand where the shock absorber attaches. This tool may be used on any coil spring/control arm type front end.



Photo #6: The lower pivot plate on the compressor attaches to the bottom side of the lower control arm using the supplied 5/16" X 2-1/4" grade eight bolts and flat washers. The bolts will screw into the lower shock mounting holes on the control arms.

Photo #7: Next, lubricate the lower pivot shaft with grease and pass the threaded shaft up through the pivot plate and through the upper shock hole in the upper control arm stand.



Photo #8 & Diagram: Install the large diameter 1/4" thick washers, the three thin washers and then the tall nut on the threaded rod.

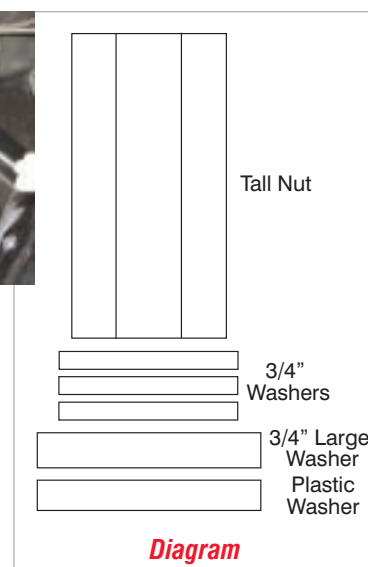


Photo #9a & 9b: Now, using a wrench, tighten the tall nut. By tightening the nut, the lower control arm will be pulled up and the load (spring pressure) will be taken off of the upper control arm and spindle. To make sure there is no load on the upper control arm, look at the upper control arm bumper and make sure it is not touching the upper control arm.

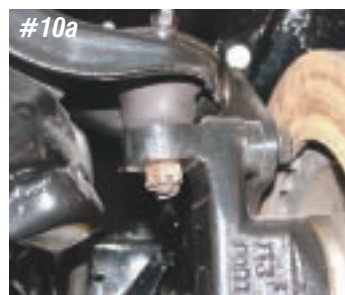




Photo #10a & 10b & 10c: With the load taken off the upper control arm, remove the cotter pin and nut from the upper ball joint. Using a ball joint pickle fork tool, disconnect the ball joint from the spindle.

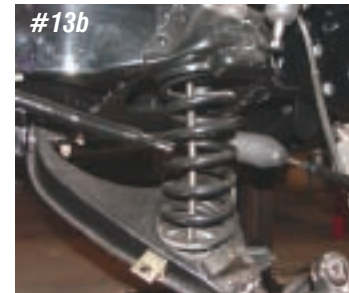


Photo #13a & 13b & 13c & 13d: To remove the coil springs, turn the tall nut on the spring compressor counterclockwise. This will allow the lower control arm to swing down. Place a floor jack under the lower ball joint nut to support the lower control arm as the nut on the spring compressor is turned. Lower the floor jack and remove the coil spring.



Photo #14: The 2" lowering coil springs **P/N 21-133** are black powder coated and are 2-1/2" shorter than the stock coil springs, which will lower the car 2". The lowering springs have a 60 lb higher load rating than the stock coil spring for a better ride than just cutting a stock set of coil springs. These springs can be used with a small block or big block.

Photo #11a & 11b & 11c & 11d: The upper control arm is held to the upper control arm stand with two 7/16" nuts and lock washers. To remove the control arm on the drivers side, the power steering pump needed to be removed and moved inward away from the control arm. The header also needed to be removed. If the car had exhaust manifolds, they would not have needed to be removed. With the pump and header out of the way, remove the two 7/16" nuts and lock washers. Slide the control arm inward and lift it out through the engine compartment.



Photo #15a & 15b & 15c: Using only the floor jack to hold the lower control arm and coil spring in place, feed the coil spring compressor back up through the control arm and frame.



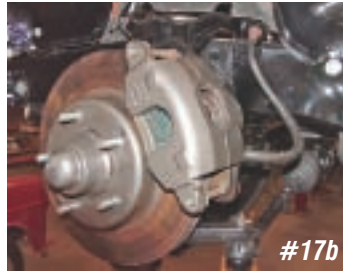
Photo #12a & 12b: The new upper control arms **P/N 21-185** are black powder coated and have aluminum cross shafts and new ball joints. The new control arms have two degrees more positive camber and five degrees more positive caster. With the additional caster and camber, there will be no problem achieving the proper alignment specifications for any steering type. With the control arm in place, torque the control arm shaft nuts to 55 ft/lbs.



Photo #16: Tighten the tall nut on the spring compressor to pull the lower control arm upward. Once the control arm and spindle are high enough, attach the upper ball joint and install the new cotter pin. With the ball joint attached to the spindle, the coil spring compressor can now be removed.



#17a



#17b



#17c

Photo #17a & 17b & 17c: Next, attach the outer tie rod ends to the steering arms, install the disc brake calipers and connect the sway bar back to the lower control arms.



#18a



#18b

Photo #18a & 18b: The stock length absorbers can be used with the lowering coil springs.

Photo #19: With the control arm fully installed, the power steering pump and header can be installed back on the engine. Repeat the same procedure on the passenger side. The header will not need to be removed on the passenger side.



With the front end back together, we are headed back to the alignment shop for a proper alignment this time!

Good Luck! 