

CFTECH

IMPROVING YOUR CLASSIC FORD JUST GOT EASIER

How to

Fit an adjustable platform kit

Coil-overs are great but they do have their limitations. This new kit gives you adjustable front ride height — and comfort.

If you want to adjust the ride height on the front end of your classic Ford, nothing beats a pair of coil-over-converted struts for convenience. To go lower (or higher), simply wind the collar at the base of the spring up (or down) to get the desired height, and you're all set — it's a lot easier and quicker than swapping springs around.

But traditional coil-overs do have their downsides on a road car. The 2.5 inch internal diameter (ID) springs are a lot harsher than the 5.5 inch diameter ones that are standard fitment, and their narrower diameter means that people tend to use aluminium, Rose-jointed top mounts. You need to use solid ones that again can make for a very crashy ride.

But now there's an alternative. Dave Colledge of Retro Ford has developed a new coil-over-style kit to convert your struts to allow adjustable ride height while using standard diameter springs. You get the best of both worlds — easy on-car adjustability while retaining a decent level of comfort

thanks to the larger springs — plus the ability to retain your standard top mounts, if you so wish.

The kit looks simple, because it is — you remove the original spring pan from your strut, weld the threaded sleeve in place, then slide/screw on the threaded collars and new spring pan. With the spring, top cup and top mount fitted, to adjust the ride height simply wind the collars up or down — much like traditional coil-overs. Retro Ford currently stocks a choice of four different poundage springs to go with the kit, and if they haven't already been fitted, you'll also need some new damper inserts — again Retro Ford can supply these in adjustable form.

Dave initially designed the kit with Mk1 and Mk2 Cortina in mind, but as the strut tubes of Mk1 and Mk2 Escorts and Capris are the same diameter, it will work with these, too. Dave recommends welding the threaded sleeve in place with the top 15 mm from the top of the strut tube — with the spring pan at its lowest point, this means the kit will lower the front of your

Ford about 2 inches (with -2 inch springs installed, that's a healthy 4 inch drop). You can weld the sleeve further down the tube if you want to go lower, but you risk the top of the tyre fouling the bottom of the spring pan once the wheel is in place — with the threaded tube welded 15 mm from the top this gives plenty of adjustment.

Installing the kit to each strut is pretty straightforward — though you do need to be comfortable using a welder. Dave used TiG for this feature as it gives a neater weld, but a MiG welder is absolutely fine for the job — you just need to make sure you cover the threaded sleeve when you're welding it into position to avoid weld spatter getting on the fine threads. Dave also recommends you only weld the bottom of the collar in place — it'll be plenty strong enough. If you try and weld the top to the strut you risk distorting the tube, and it'll also mean you'll need to fit the new spring pan and top and bottom collars in place before you start welding.

Let's get to it!

Info

Tools required:
Vice, angle grinder,
MiG welder, tea

Contact:
Retro Ford
01536 204823
www.retroford.co.uk

TECH FEATURES INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Getting technical with the best in the business. Here's everything you need!

OUR PROJECTS

Updates on Mike's Mk1 Fiesta and Ben's Mk1 Cortina projects

86



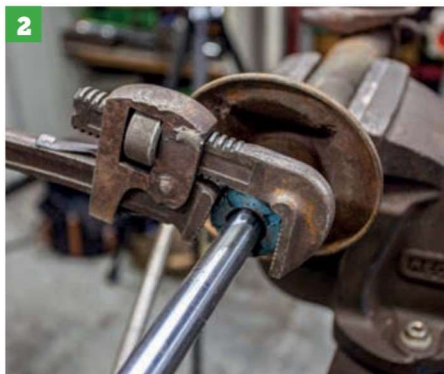
EXPERT CLINIC

Problem with your Ford? Our tech experts are here to help

90



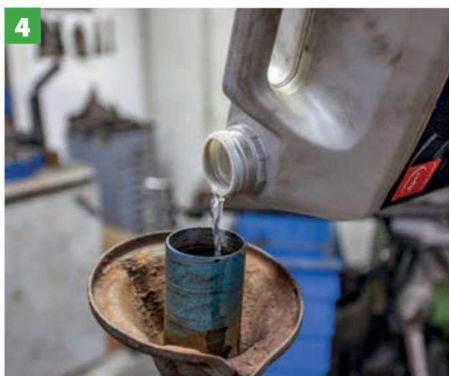
1 With the original top mount, top cup and spring removed from the strut, the first job is to remove the original insert, held in place by a large nut.



2 It's likely to be a pig to remove so with the strut mounted in a vice, we've used a pair of Stilson's to undo it. With a new nut supplied with the replacement inserts, we don't need to worry about damaging the old nut.



3 With a container underneath to catch the damper oil, slide out the original insert...



4 Then pour the remainder of the oil out from the tube and wash the inside out of the latter with some brake cleaner.



5 Now refit the original insert nut to protect the threads inside the tube.



6 To remove the original spring pan Dave recommends using angle grinder fitted with a cutting disc and attacking the base of the pan from angle, rather than trying to grind off the section below, to avoid damaging the tube.



7 Make a series of cuts all the way round, and you should be able to tap the pan off.



8 Now with a flap disc fitted to the grinder, carefully remove the remainder of the spring pan section — you can start to see where it was braised in position here.



9 Keeping working away and eventually you should have a nice, clean tube.



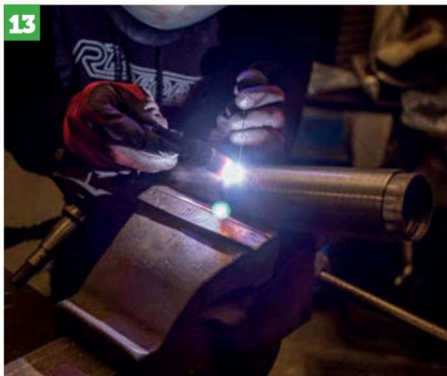
The final job prior to welding the sleeve in place is to clean up the metal near the top of the tube by hand using emery paper.



Slide the threaded sleeve onto the strut tube.



The sleeve needs to be positioned 15 mm from the top of the tube.



Now weld the base of the sleeve to the tube.



You want a continuous run of weld all the way round. Once happy, clean up the welds if necessary. Now's also a good time to add a lick of paint to the strut body.



Before you fit the new insert, carefully test fit the new retaining nut to make sure it threads onto the tube properly.



Then remove the nut and slide in the insert...



Before refitting and tightening the nut.



Now thread on the bottom collar, making sure the shoulder is pointing upwards...

how to: fit an adjustable platform kit



19 Followed by the spring pan and top threaded collar.



20 Wind the collars down towards the bottom of the sleeve to avoid the need to use spring compressors when fitting the spring and top cup and mount.



21 Then slide on the spring and your original top cup...



22 Followed by the top mount, then fit and tighten the retaining nut.



23 That's it, you're done. Now to do the other strut



24 Finally, a word about top mounts. While you can retain your standard ones, adjustable ones will still work too, if you want to dial in the camber.