

Front Spring Replacement

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For what it's worth, this weekend I worked on my front springs. Both were sagging badly and passenger side top leaf was broken. I figured after a year of driving on a broken spring held together by those u-bolt shackles it was time to work on them.

My first screw-up was I counted I had 5 leaf springs, no good springs in my area so I located them at a boneyard in PA and had them ups'd in. (cost quite cheap). Unfortunately at that time I had a choice of 7 leaf or 5 leaf and got the 5 leaf. Guess what I found when I removed the old ones, they were 7 leaf OOPS!. So now I got creative and carefully disassembled my existing springs and one of the "new" springs using the old shackles and a pair of welding vise grips to bolt back together and tighten. Now nowhere at a parts store, including the local chrysler dealer does anyone have any rebound clips. Those straps of cheap metal that wrap around the springs to help keep them together. For this I went to Ace hardware and got some 3/4" flat steel and cut into 4-1/2" pieces, drilled a couple holes at each end and mounted to the springs with 3/8" bolts about midway up from each end and used them for my rebound clips. So far so good.

Now the Jeep manual says to put vehicle on a jack stand to frame and use a hydraulic jack to relieve axle weight off spring, remove steering stabilizer before dropping spring then disconnect axle then drop spring. Works in theory on paper but the stabilizer doesn't want to come off that easy. You actually need a second hydraulic jack to hold spring only and the first one to raise the axle off it.

OK now everything's off on one side. Install my "new modified" spring, reconnected everything, changed shock while I had everything open. The book said to tighten everything but the bolts at each end of the spring and tighten after lowering vehicle and let things spread out. Since I now have my broken spring fixed I look at the vehicle and the passenger side is now about 2"-3" higher than the driver side I haven't touched yet!

Great, I think I now know how the spring places "re-arch" your spring, take apart, add fiber spacers at end of each leaf, (ones off old were about 1/16" inch - I guess they allow for spring movement? - I used 2 layers of fiber gasket material where they were missing). With center bolt back in and spacers I then put my homemade rebound clips on and spring "re-arched" itself, at least near to what it probably was originally.

So, I did the same thing using the top leaf from "new" spring in place of my existing leaf so length and arch should be similar, redid this one like the other side mounted and everything now matches and I gained about 2"-3" lift.

Amazing.

Truck rides better than it has since I got it last year. Now the big test will be how it looks in a month or so. If your springs are just slightly sagging but in otherwise decent shape this may be a simple way to get another year or so out of them with a cheap lift in the process. Just **MAKE SURE** you use good clamps or shackles when you disassemble and reassemble your springs.

Tom Collins (Tampa, FL) 75 miles WSW of the Land of the Ubiquitous Damned Billion Dollar Rat!