

CONTROL ARM BALL JOINTS REPLACEMENT

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March 2006

When inspecting the front suspension of an older truck, one of the most common components that may need replacing is the (upper and lower) control arms' ball joint. A local alignment shop can determine if the ball joints need replacing. Excessively worn ball joints may also be observed by raising and securing one side of the front suspension. Then, use a pushing and pulling motion on the top and bottom of the wheel. Any play in the ball joints observed indicates worn ball joints that will need replacing.



LOWER BALL JOINTS

The ball joints on the lower control arms (LCAs) are pressed in. A ball joint press may be used both to remove the worn ball joint and to install the new, replacement ball joint. The ball joint press may be acquired at the local auto parts store for a refundable deposit. The press may also be purchased at the local tool store. Using a press correctly removes and installs the ball joints without damaging the mounting hole of the LCAs.



TOOLS REQUIRED

The following tools are needed to remove the ball joints from the LCAs:

- Safety Glasses (and Leather Gloves, optional)
- Ball Joint Press
- ½" Drive Ratchet
- ½" Drive Socket (sized to fit Ball Joint Press)
- Cheater Bar (for leverage)
- Penetrating Oil



PROCEDURE



The job of replacing the lower ball joint may be accomplished with the LCA unbolted and removed from the front suspension or left in place. For many who rebuild the complete front suspension, the ball joints are but one of the many components replaced. Therefore, the LCA is usually separated from the front suspension.

1. Spray the sides of the lower ball joint with penetrating oil.
2. Place the receiving sleeve with the arbor around the ball joint (zerk-side) on the underside of the LCA.
3. Place the adapter on the ball joint (threaded-side) on the topside of the LCA.
4. Position the C-frame press between the adapter and arbor and tighten securely. Be sure the press is properly aligned with the ball joint (not cockeyed.)
5. Keeping the press aligned at all times, tightened the press using the ratchet with the proper size socket. A cheater bar may be needed to assist in removing the ball joint. As the press is tightened, the ball joint will slowly back out of the mounting hole on the LCA until it is clear from the LCA.
6. Clean in and around ball joint's mounting hole of the LCA. Ensure that the area around the mounting hole free from debris and residue.
7. To install the new ball joint, first remove the zerk fitting from the ball joint.
8. Position the ball joint into the mounting hole insuring that it is properly aligned (not cockeyed).
9. Place the receiving sleeve with the adapter around the ball joint (threaded-side) on the topside of the LCA.
10. Place the arbor on the ball joint (zerk-side) on the underside of the LCA.
11. Position the C-frame press between the adapter and arbor and tighten securely. Again, be sure the press is properly aligned with the ball joint (not cockeyed).
12. Keeping the press aligned at all times, tighten the press using the ratchet with the proper size socket until it is fully seated.
13. Reinstall the zerk fitting onto the ball joint.



14. Repeat this procedure for the lower ball joint on the other LCA.

TIP



To install the rubber boot once the lower ball joint is replaced, lightly coat the inside sealing surface of the rubber boot with a thin film of grease. Then, using the sleeve from the Ball Joint Press and a block of wood, tap the rubber boot over the ball joint.

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