

BUICK, CHEVROLET, OLDSMOBILE & PONTIAC

Buick (Exc. Skyhawk, Skylark & Riviera)
Chevrolet (Exc. Chevette, Citation, Corvette & Monza)
Oldsmobile (Exc. Omega, Starfire & Toronado)
Pontiac (Exc. Phoenix & Sunbird)

DESCRIPTION

Independent front suspension is used on all models. Each wheel is attached to frame by means of a steering knuckle, upper and lower control arm, and ball joint assembly. Front wheels are held in proper relation by linkage which attaches to steering knuckle. Inner end of lower control arm is connected to frame with rubber pivot bushings and outer end is connected to steering knuckle by a ball joint. Inner end of upper control arm is attached to cross shaft, which bolts to frame. Outer end of upper arm is attached by a ball joint to steering knuckle. Side roll stability is maintained with stabilizer shaft, supported by brackets at each frame side rail (forward of springs). End of stabilizer shaft is connected to lower control arm. Coil springs are located between each frame side rail and lower control arm. Front shock absorbers are located within spring.

ADJUSTMENT

CASTER & CAMBER

See *Caster and Camber Adjustments and Specifications in WHEEL ALIGNMENT Section.*

RIDING HEIGHT

See *Riding Height Adjustments and Specifications in WHEEL ALIGNMENT Section.*

FRONT WHEEL BEARINGS

See *Wheel Bearing Adjustment in WHEEL ALIGNMENT Section.*

BALL JOINTS

See *Ball Joint Checking in WHEEL ALIGNMENT Section.*

REMOVAL & INSTALLATION

STABILIZER BAR

Removal — Support front end with stands at side rails.
NOTE — It may be necessary to remove wheel and tire assembly to obtain suitable access. Disconnect both links from stabilizer shaft by removing each link nut and rotating shaft up from lower control arm. Remove screws holding stabilizer shaft brackets to frame. Remove brackets and rubber insulators from shaft. Remove stabilizer bar.

Installation — Reverse removal procedure and tighten nuts and bolts.

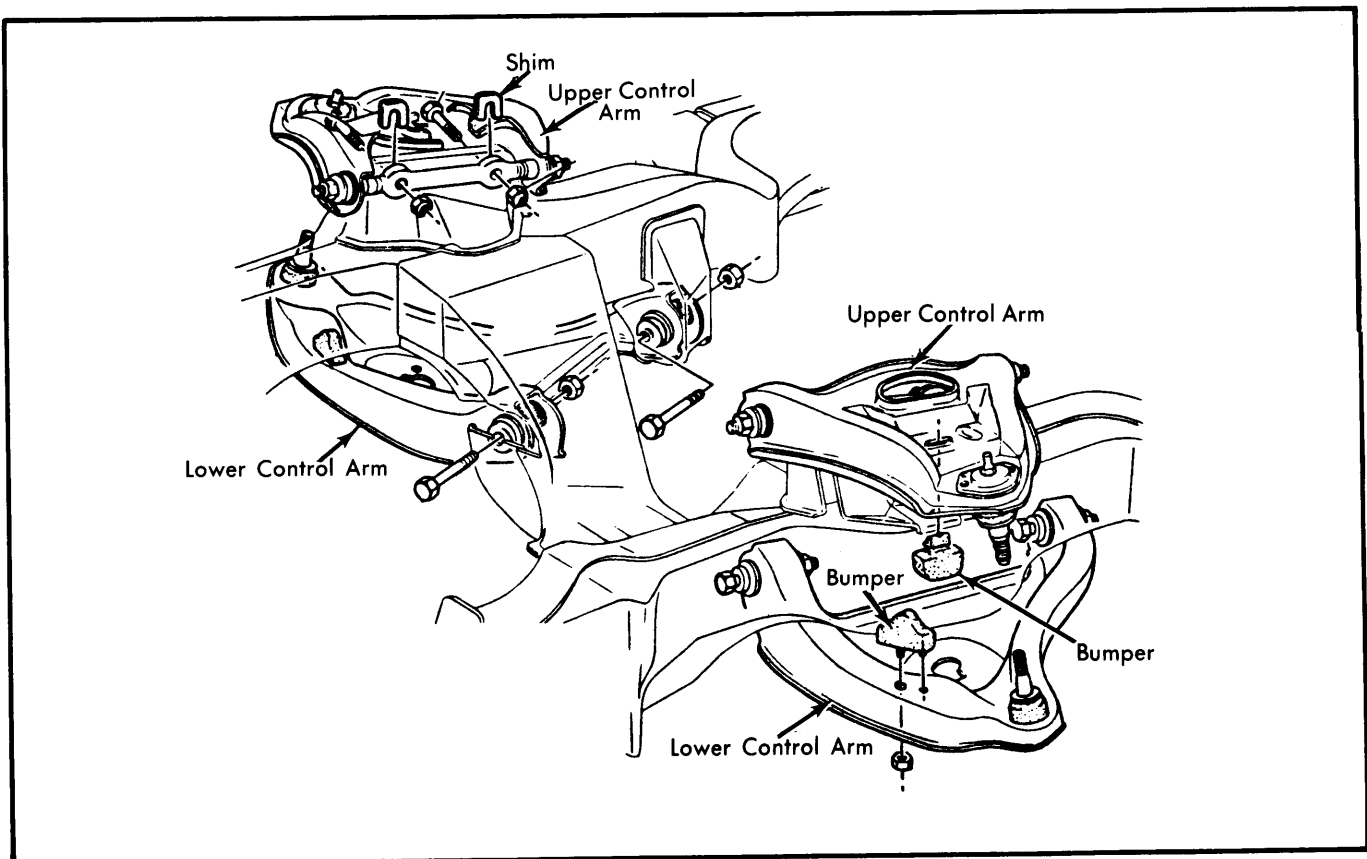


Fig. 1 View of Front Suspension

Front Suspension

BUICK, CHEVROLET, OLDSMOBILE & PONTIAC (Cont.)

COIL SPRING

Removal (Exc. Oldsmobile) — Support vehicle at side rails, then remove wheel and tire assembly. Disconnect lower end of shock absorber and push up through spring. Disconnect front stabilizer rod link from lower control arm. Attach safety chain around lower control arm and coil spring. Position jack, with suitable removal tool (J-23028) attached, under lower control arm. Raise jack to remove tension on control arm pivot bolts. Remove pivot bolts and nuts (rear bolt first). Lower control arm slowly until spring is fully extended. Remove safety chain and spring. **NOTE** — Do not apply force on lower control arm and ball joint; proper maneuvering of spring will allow for easy removal.

Removal (Oldsmobile) — Support vehicle at side rails, then remove wheel and tire assembly. Disconnect front stabilizer rod link from lower control arm and remove shock absorber. Install suitable coil spring compression tools (BT-74081A, 1B or B-7522), and compress spring until free in its seat. Remove 2 lower control arm pivot bolts and disengage lower control arm from lower frame.

Installation (All Models) — Reverse removal procedures and tighten nuts and bolts. Ensure spring is turned to proper mounting position as follows: Bottom end of coil spring must show in first drain hole and not cover second drain hole.

STEERING KNUCKLE AND/OR STEERING KNUCKLE ARM

Removal — 1) Raise vehicle and support with floor stands under lift points. Remove wheel, caliper and hub assembly. Loosen lower ball joint-to-control arm nut, use suitable tool to break ball joint loose from control arm.

2) Place adjustable floor jack under lower control arm and place pressure on lower control arm to keep coil spring in place. Remove tie rod end from steering knuckle. Remove upper ball joint from steering knuckle with suitable tool. Remove lower ball joint nut, remove steering knuckle from vehicle.

Installation — Reverse removal procedure while noting the following: Tighten all nuts and bolts. Adjust front wheel bearings.

UPPER CONTROL ARM

Removal — Raise vehicle and support with jack under frame. Remove wheel and tire assembly. Disconnect shock absorber at top. With second jack, support vehicle weight under outer edge of lower control arm and relieve compression on upper control arm bumper. LOOSEN nut on upper ball joint tapered stud. **CAUTION** — To avoid injury, do not remove ball stud nut. Removing nut will release compressed chassis spring. Wire brake and knuckle assembly aside. Noting shim location and thickness, remove upper control arm shaft-to-frame nuts. Remove control arm assembly.

Installation — Reverse removal procedure, tightening nuts and bolts. Check front end wheel alignment.

Bushing Service — With control arm removed from vehicle, remove nut and retainer from both ends of control arm shaft. Place control arm in an arbor press and position suitable tools as required. Press out and discard old bushings. Reverse procedure, for installation.

LOWER CONTROL ARM

Removal — Remove coil spring and stabilizer link. Pry lower ball joint stud from steering knuckle. Unbolt control arm from frame and remove control arm.

Installation — Reverse removal procedure, tightening nuts and bolts. **CAUTION** — Tighten control arm-to-frame attaching bolts with car off the hoist and at curb weight. Check front end wheel alignment.

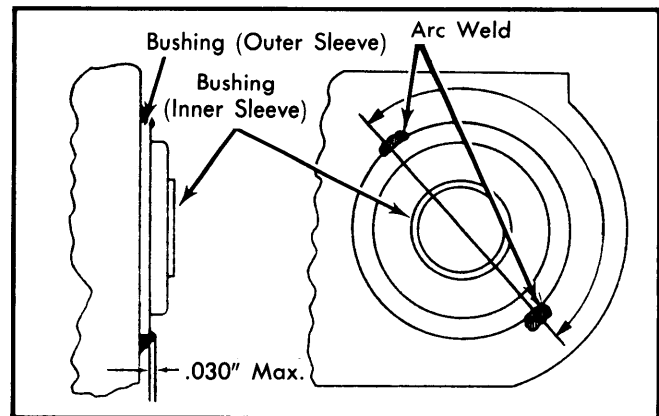


Fig. 2 Lower Control Arm Bushing (Tack Weld)

Bushing Service (Except Oldsmobile) — Raise vehicle and support at side rails. Remove lower shock absorber bolts and/or nuts and push shock up into coil spring. Remove front stabilizer rod link from lower control arm. Position jack, with suitable tool (J-23028) attached such that bushings seat in grooves of tool. Install a safety chain around control arm and coil spring. Remove control arm pivot bolts (rear bolt first). Slowly release jack and lower control arm until there is clearance to install bushing removal tools. **CAUTION** — Install suitable spacer (J-21474-12) to prevent distortion of lower control arm. After new bushings are installed, flare or tack weld as necessary (see illustrations). Reverse removal procedure to reinstall control arm and check front wheel alignment.

Bushing Service (Oldsmobile) — Remove control arm from vehicle and use suitable tools to press bushings from arm. After new bushings are installed, flare or tack weld as necessary (see illustrations). Reverse removal procedure to reinstall control arm and then check front wheel alignment.

UPPER BALL JOINT

Removal — Raise vehicle and support lower control arm. Remove wheel and tire assembly. Pry ball joint stud from steering knuckle. Chisel or drill rivets which retain ball joint. Remove ball joint.

Installation — Reverse removal procedure, using special nuts and bolts supplied in service kit. Tighten all nuts and bolts and adjust front wheel bearing.

BUICK, CHEVROLET, OLDSMOBILE & PONTIAC (Cont.)

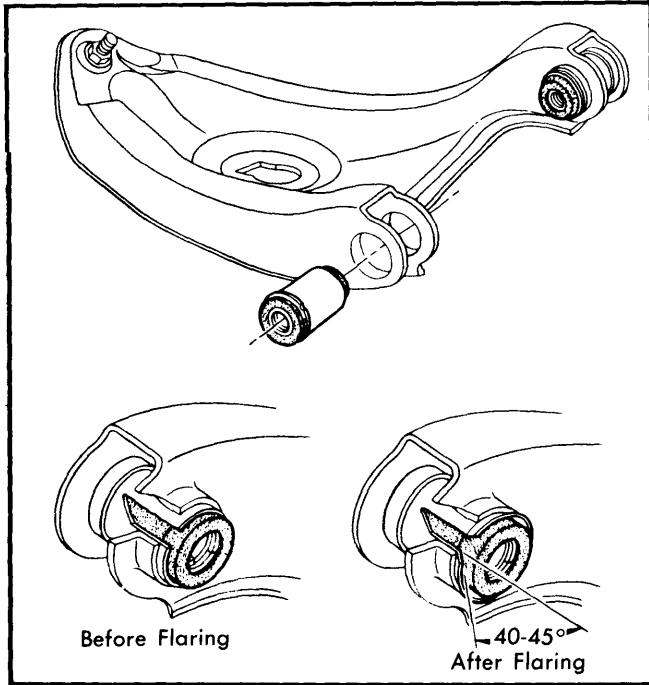


Fig. 3 Lower Control Arm Bushing Installation (Flaring)

LOWER BALL JOINT

Removal — Raise vehicle and support lower control arms under spring seats. This keeps spring compressed and allows removal tool to have proper clearance. Remove brake caliper

assembly and suspend out of way. **NOTE** — Do not disconnect brake hose. Pry ball joint stud from control arm. Remove ball joint seal and retainer (pry off with screwdriver). Remove ball joint.

Installation — Reverse removal procedures, tightening nuts and bolts.

TIGHTENING SPECIFICATIONS

Application	Ft. Lbs.
Upper Ball Joint Stud	65
Lower Ball Joint Stud	90
Upper Control Arm-to-Frame	
88 & 98	95
LaSabre & Electra	85
Malibu & El Camino	45
Camaro, Impala & Caprice	73
LeMans, Grand Prix & Firebird	70
Catalina & Bonneville	74
All Others	65
Lower Control Arm-to-Frame	
88 & 98	85
La Sabre & Electra	95
LeMans & Grand Prix	70
Catalina & Bonneville	124
All Others	65
Stabilizer Bar Bracket-to-Frame	25
Stabilizer Link Nut	
All (Exc. LeMans)	13
LeMans	24