

# TRUCK & SUV PERFORMANCE

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## Lift Kit Bonanza

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Lexus Hybrid Debut  
NHTSA's New Safety Regulations  
Next Generation Mobile Navigation

# LIFT-KIT



# BONANZA

Whether Sold Separately or as Part of a Package, Sales of Suspension Lift Kits are Hitting New Heights

Text and Photos By  
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**T**he popularity of lift kits and off-road accessories has reached new heights over the past few

years. Truck and SUV owners from all walks of life are looking for new ways to make their vehicle stand out. One thing is for certain: it's easy to rise above the rest in a lifted truck or SUV that rides high above the masses on today's roadways. Easier still is cashing in on the profit potential of these aftermarket accessories.

In this issue *TSP* offers you a step-by-step install of Fabtech Motorsports' popular Performance 3.5-inch lift kit, and follows that up with some best-selling aftermarket items you can upsell. Then we walk you through a suspension install from ARB, and point out how one shop in particular was able to beef up a customer's initial purchase. When warranted and thoroughly explained, add-on sales can increase the customer's sense of satisfaction, and at the same time help you squeeze extra cash out of each sale. For the first install, we packaged Fabtech's kit with some no-nonsense tires from Mickey Thompson, lights from PIAA, and some bolt-on basics from Westin Automotive. (Special thanks to our friends at West Coast Firestone in Torrance, California, for letting us borrow a bay and put this all together!).

Fabtech's 100,000-sq.-ft. facility is located in Chino, California. It began as a small custom fabrication shop in 1989, but since then it's grown into a world-class manufacturer of suspension systems and off-road accessories. This install was performed on a 2003 Toyota Tacoma, and took about two hours to complete, with Fabtech's R&D Manager **Steve Erdelyi** explaining the process while R&D Technician **Jeff Wise** performed the install.

## Installing Fabtech's 3-inch Lift Kit



1. With the truck sitting on a flat and level surface, measure the distance from the center of the front spindle to the top of the fender opening. Write this measurement down. Then place the truck on a lift and elevate.



2. Remove three nuts securing the upper spring seat to the mount frame. Leave upper spring seat/strut assembly nut attached. Remove nut and bolt securing bottom of spring seat/strut assembly to lower control arm and remove assembly from truck.



3. Using supplied 3/8-inch bolts, with one 3/8-inch lock washer followed by a 3/8-inch flat washer, secure new spring seat to upper spring mount. Secure lower coilover mount to lower control arm with original nut/bolt. Tighten till bushings slightly compress.



4. Torque the three top bolts on the upper spring seat to 28 ft./lbs., and torque the lower coilover mount to 65 ft./lbs.



5. Tighten the lower coil spring collar on the coil-over until you start to compress the coil spring. Continue to tighten by hand until you can go no further.



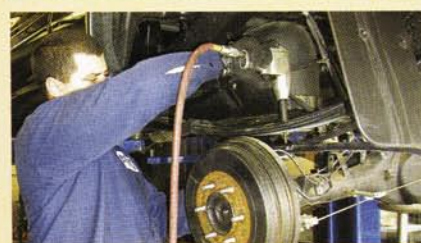
6. Use supplied spanner wrench to tighten spring collar until one-inch of thread is exposed. Tighten locking collar under lower spring collar using a hammer and a drift punch to tap the collar around until tight.



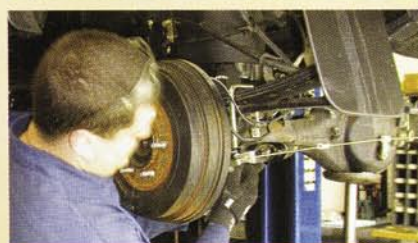
7. Now we focus on the rear Add-a-Leaf Kit. Clamp the leaf spring in the middle of the spring and remove the center bolt.



8. Separate the springs and install the provided add-a-leaf with the new center bolt in a pyramid pattern, smallest on the bottom graduating to the longest on top.



9. Clamp the spring and tighten the center bolt so as not to leave a gap between the springs.



10. Adjust the brake lines if necessary to ensure that there is adequate length for the lines to perform properly.



11. Align the shocks, and torque them to manufacturer's specifications.

## LIFT-KIT BONANZA



12. Reinstall the tires and torque the lug nuts to factory specs. Set the truck back on the ground and bounce up and down on the front end of the truck to settle the front coil springs.



13. Front ride height can be set from one to three inches over original ride height. Measure distance from center of front spindle to top of fender opening. Compare with your original measurement. To make adjustments, put the truck on the lift again, loosen locking nut on lower spring collar and either tighten or loosen the collar using the spanner wrench. Make adjustments two turns per measurement. Be sure to tighten locking nut on lower spring collar prior to setting truck back on ground.



14. After you have set the proper ride height, reinstall the front sway bar links and check the toe-in of the front tires. Adjust the toe-in if necessary and test-drive the truck. It is recommended that the truck's tires be balanced after the install to ensure proper alignment. After 50 miles, measure the height again and adjust if necessary.

## Add-On Options to Consider

The increased popularity of lift-kits has resulted in more options for eager enthusiasts. A variety of suspension kit and lift-kit related accessories are currently available to satisfy the needs of customers.

### LIFT KITS

Consumers can choose from 2-inch, 3-inch, 6-inch, or 12-inch lift kits for both two and four-wheel drive vehicles. Fabtech Motorsports, RCD Suspension, Rancho, Rough Country, and Skyjacker are just a few of the many companies that offer lift kits. These kits are designed to improve a vehicle's suspension, and can provide greater ground clearance for off-road performance.



Fabtech's adjustable coilover system is a fully take apart shock that allows changing of the internal valving to suit the customer's needs.

### WHEELS AND TIRES

A lift kit also allows for larger tires. Consumers have the option of upgrading their wheels and tires to make their lifted vehicle look even more rugged. A wide variety of off-road rims and wheels are available.



The Baja Claw radial tire, with M/T Classic II rims, has the aggressive tread pattern that serious off-roaders demand.

### BUMPER GUARDS

Consumers who want to go all out can accessorize their vehicle by installing one of many bumper guards on the market. Westin Automotive and WAAG are just two examples of many popular brands that offer a wide selection of off-road parts.



Westin's Safari Light Bar adds extra front end protection, a rugged look, and a secure mounting point for auxiliary driving lights.

## **SOURCES**

### **Fabtech Motorsports**

909/597-7800

Fax: 909/597-7185

[www.fabtechmotorsports.com](http://www.fabtechmotorsports.com)

**Circle No. 220 on Reader Service Card**

### **KC HiLiTES**

928/635-2607

[www.kchilites.com](http://www.kchilites.com)

**Circle No. 221 on Reader Service Card**

### **Mickey Thompson Tires**

330/928-9092

Fax: 330/928-0503

[www.mickeythompson tires.com](http://www.mickeythompson tires.com)

**Circle No. 222 on Reader Service Card**

### **PIAA**

503/643-7422

Fax: 503/643-9144

[www.piaa.com](http://www.piaa.com)

**Circle No. 223 on Reader Service Card**

### **Rancho**

734/384-7805

[www.gorancho.com](http://www.gorancho.com)

**Circle No. 224 on Reader Service Card**

### **RCD Suspension**

619/588-4723

Fax: 619/447-8335

[www.racecardynamics.com](http://www.racecardynamics.com)

**Circle No. 225 on Reader Service Card**

### **Rough Country**

800/222-7023

[rough.roughcountry.com](http://rough.roughcountry.com)

**Circle No. 226 on Reader Service Card**

### **Skyjacker**

318/388-0816

Fax: 318/388-2608

[www.skyjacker.com](http://www.skyjacker.com)

**Circle No. 227 on Reader Service Card**

### **SLP Performance Parts, Inc.**

732/349-2109

Fax: 732/244-0867

[www.slpnj.com](http://www.slpnj.com)

**Circle No. 228 on Reader Service Card**

### **WAAG**

800/492-2452

Fax: 818/989-5226

[www.waag.com](http://www.waag.com)

**Circle No. 229 on Reader Service Card**

### **West Coast Firestone**

310/618-8883

**Circle No. 230 on Reader Service Card**

### **Westin Automotive**

800/345-8476

[www.westinautomotive.com](http://www.westinautomotive.com)

**Circle No. 231 on Reader Service Card**