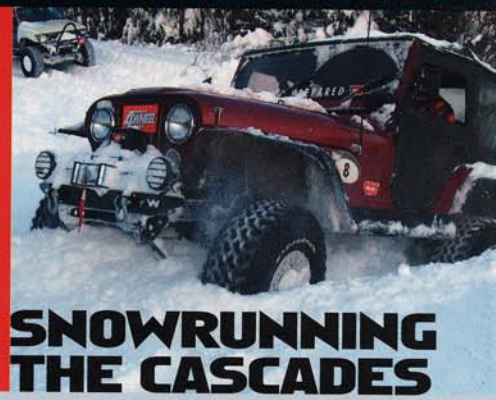


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PRIMEDIA

IT'S LIFTED AND RIDING ON 35s— THE NEXT STEP IS UP TO YOU...

BY Edward A. Sanchez
AND David Kennedy

PHOTOGRAPHY
DAVID KENNEDY

There's no question Ford had a hit on its

hands when it introduced the new F-150. Replacing what many called the "Taurus truck," the '04 finally gave the Ford icon some visual swagger to back up the "Built Ford Tough" tagline. Being a perennial bestseller and aftermarket favorite, it didn't take long for the goodies to start coming out for the new Effie.

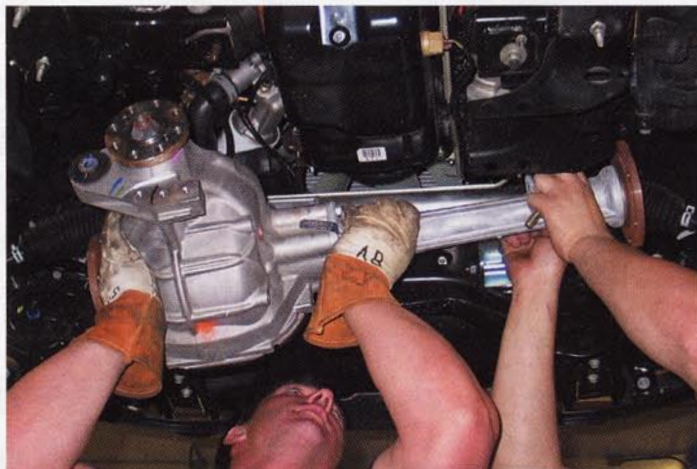
That's why we've teamed up with Toyo tires to give away this brand-new Super Crew to one of you lucky readers. You can enter to win it right now at www.toyo.com. But we didn't want you to have to drive around in a stock F-150 so we took it down to Fabtech Motorsports to install its new 6-inch lift.

The Fabtech kit will let you fit 35s so we chose Toyo's new Open Country M/T tire. Though not a hard-core off-road tire, the tire represents a good compromise for a daily driver that also serves double-duty as a weekend warrior. We went with the 35x12.50-18 size for this application.



WIN

THIS TRUCK!



Installing the 6-inch Fabtech lift begins with stripping the stock knuckles, CV-shafts, shocks, differential, lower control arms, and front driveshaft out of the truck. There's no need to unhook the factory brake lines so the calipers can be hooked to the frame with some bungee cords. If you're going to have the axle gears changed, now is the time to do it because the front differential has to come out anyway. For 35-inch tires on a daily driver we'd recommend 4.56 gears.

1 Like most IFS lift kits on the market, Fabtech relocates the lower control arms with a two-piece subframe to gain the 6 inches of suspension lift. The factory control-arm bolts are used to attach the Fabtech parts. New hardware is used to reattach the Ford control arms. One of the things that we like about the Fabtech kit is that it improves ground clearance by using an arched subframe design instead of a simple square tube that could hang you up on obstacles. **2** You have two shock options that you can choose from when ordering the Fabtech lift. The entry-level kit comes with new coil springs that you'll need to have installed on your original Ford struts. Option two is a little more expensive, but the 2½-inch Dirt Logic coilover shocks are a huge improvement over the stock hardware and come fully assembled. The labor costs you save by not having to change coil springs makes the Dirt Logic shock option (PN FTS22022) even more attractive. These race-inspired coilover shocks come with a special upper mount that bolts into the F-150's frame, and if you leave the lower control-arm bolts loose you can swing the arms up till they line up with the shock's lower mount to make the installation even easier. **3** The next step is to remove the Ford wheel bearing and hub assemblies from the stock knuckles and install them in the new Fabtech units. These new cast-iron assemblies are identical to the Ford pieces they replace, but are made to compensate for the new lower control-arm location. The four outer bolts retain the wheel hub in the knuckle, and the three small bolts hold the inner seal and vacuum-actuated hub in place. You'll have to reroute the vacuum lines that connect to the hub, but Ford made them long enough that they'll still reach with the 6-inch lift. **4** When fully assembled the new Fabtech F-150 suspension almost looks too good to hide behind a set of Toyo tires. Here the CV-shaft has been reinstalled with a spacer (A) to compensate for the slight increase in track width, a skid-plate (B) has been bolted in place to tie the new subframe together, and the optional dual steering-stabilizer kit (C) was added to limit any front-end shimmy the larger tires could cause. To



finish up the front end you'll need to reindex the front drive-shaft and send it out to get balanced. **5** The Fabtech 6-inch kit will clear 35x12.50-17 tires on 17x8-inch wheels with 5 inches of backspacing. To fit our 35x12.50-18 Toyo Open Country M/Ts we needed to trim the leading edge of our Ford's air dam. If you mark the line with tape before you cut it you'll get a much straighter line. But don't worry too much; no one's ever going to be able to see both sides of the truck at the same time! **6** To keep the stock F-150 ride quality and load capacity the Fabtech kit includes new lift blocks, U-bolts, and longer rear shocks. In our experience wheel-hop doesn't seem to be an issue at this low of a lift height. What is an issue on these new F-150s is driveshaft length. To keep the shaft from pulling out of the transfer case at full suspension droop, a machined aluminum spacer is supplied with the kit to avoid any potential problems. ⚙️

SOURCES

Fabtech Motorsports
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800.442.8696 (West Coast)
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