

MARK VIII STEEL SPRING CONVERSION

Back in the November 2007 Issue of the Northstar News, I authored an article about my Mark VIII and my conversion of the troublesome air ride suspension to steel springs. I have had several inquiries about the conversion since that time. I got the parts from strutmasters.com. The company has technical assistance also if you want to talk about your problems with the air ride suspension. Their phone number is 866-597-2397. The cost of the parts was a little over \$500.00 including new rear shock absorbers. All parts are available from Strutmasters.

The conversion is quite easy. All four wheels need to come off and the air lines to the bags need to be removed. On the rear, the shock absorber needs to be removed so the lower suspension arm falls down. Then the air bag just falls out. The steel spring is put in the place where the bag was and the lower arm jacked up and the shock reinstalled. The shock holds the whole suspension together. On the front there are three bolts on the top which are removed through the engine compartment. DO NOT lose the load spreading ring. The one bolt through the bottom of the strut needs to be removed and then the air bag will fall out. In order to put the steel spring in the nut at the outer end of the upper A-arm needs to be removed so the suspension comes apart. While pushing down on the lower suspension arm attach the three upper bolts. Jack up the lower arm and attach the lower strut bolt and the A-arm nut. Install a new cotter pin in the castle nut on the A-arm.

In order to clear the message on the inside screen remove the left inside trim panel in the trunk and remove the electrical connector on the computer. If I remember correctly it is the one on the bottom. The one that has the connector toward the rear of the car is for the keyless entry system. I found that out the hard way.

That is all there really is to the conversion. It takes a fair amount of time but there is no heavy lifting required. Once installed, the car will ride a little rougher for a few thousand miles. After about 4000 miles my car is riding smoother again, but still not as soft as with the air ride system. It does handle better in the curves.

If anybody has any questions call me a 651-451-6730.

Jim French