

In Our Garage - Replacing XK8 Front Shock Mounts

For many of us, any kind of time spent on our prized Jaguars is enjoyable, even laying on the garage floor under our “babies” repairing the things that have worn out or broken. And, we have a whole group of people in JAGM with similarly bizarre tastes, so why not share the joy of those moments?

With that noble thought in mind, Jeff Kosko and I decided to engage in some male bonding around the front suspensions of our XK8s. Both of our cars were displaying common symptoms of seriously deteriorated upper front shock mounts: particularly some unpleasantly harsh noises when encountering potholes and other road imperfections (luckily of course, that’s a rare occurrence around here!).

We decided to start on my car, so I ordered the parts (upper shock mounts, lower shock bushings, jounce bumpers and upper shock bellows). The total parts bill for each car was about \$250.



We dove into the job on a sunny Saturday morning in October. Having already reviewed a YouTube video of this same job on an XK8 (amazing what you can find online these days!) we felt pretty confident that we knew what we were getting into.

Sam1174, the guy who made the video, actually did the job (including the camera work) by himself; he may have a personal trainer with ready access to Human Growth Hormones, based on the way he



lifted the whole strut assemblies in and out of the car with one hand! Jeff and I figured it was a good thing to have two sets of hands for the job.

It took us around 90 minutes to remove both strut assemblies from the car, then we took them down into my basement to try to push out



Note the out of round bushing

the lower bushings, which looked pretty worn. We tried unsuccessfully to find some appropriately sized sockets to line up with the bushing sleeves, so it was time to search out a machine shop to take the struts to. We found a hole-in-the-wall shop in Westland and, after verifying that they were open, we drove over.

When we arrived at Dynamic Machine Shop and figured out how to get in (knock loudly on the garage door!) we found they also had a fixture for compressing springs and disassembling struts. I had borrowed a set of spring compressors from Advance Auto Parts for this purpose, but neither Jeff nor I were particularly looking forward to using them. The thought of the potential instantaneous release of thousands of kilojoules of energy in my garage and the resulting flying heavy metal was not a picture we wanted to be a part of. So we quickly made the decision to have Dynamic handle the disassembly and assembly of the struts. We



enjoyed a leisurely lunch at Rocky's Coney Island just down the street while the new parts were put together. Lighter in the wallet, but with full stomachs and fully assembled struts, we headed back to my garage.

installing the struts into the car was straightforward and took around an hour. When I test drove the car I was very pleased to note that all the metal-to-metal racket I'd been hearing previously was gone. Hopefully the new mounts and bushings will keep the car quiet for some time.

I was looking forward to joining Jeff to repeat the whole episode on his car, but he was so inspired by Sam1174 that he went ahead and did the whole job himself a couple weeks



later. I have no reason to believe that Jeff is into "doping," but I wouldn't recommend that you arm wrestle with him, especially if there's money on the line!

To close, this is just one more reason I am glad to be a member of JAGM. One of the most important resources available through the club is the friendship and cooperation with other members on our common interests and challenges. I would have done this job myself, because I prefer working on the XK8 myself whenever I can, but getting together with Jeff made it more fun and gave us both more confidence that we were getting it right.

Gary Hillebrand