Find out when you should use coil or strut spacers and which ones you should be using

So why use coil spacers? Coil spacers are ideal for those who want a moderate increase in lift height, while maintaining near factory ride & handling for the least amount of money. They are also a great idea if you are looking to raise the height of your 4WD, but want to be sure about the extra height before plunging into the cost of a full suspension kit.

For those of us with coil sprung solid axle vehicles the addition of a coil spring spacer can provide many benefits, such as compensating for uneven load distribution, spring settling and sagging. By simply fitting the appropriate spacer between the spring and the spring seat you can achieve an instant increase in vehicle ride height. Sometimes this can eliminate the need to replace coil springs to accommodate other modifications.

Which Material is Better for My Spacer Lift Kit?

Rubber – although a few styles of spacers are still made of rubber, this material is becoming increasingly rare in the manufacturing of spacer lift kits. The softer rubber offers exceptional vibration absorbing characteristics, but the higher raw material cost, expensive tooling and manufacturing process limits the production on higher spacers. Rubber in general is not completely impervious to fuels, oils and road contaminants. The softer material can resist tearing but overloading or pinching can cause failure if not maintained.

Metal – an increasing number of premium spacer lift kits are now made of either aluminium (cast and billet machined) or steel. Unlike aluminium, steel spacers are prone to rust if not correctly coated and fixed into position preventing movement. Metal spacers can be powder coated, painted, or anodised in a host of different colors for a custom look. In certain circumstances, aluminium spacers can experience a small amount of electrolysis if they are mounted directly to the steel frames and the vehicle has wayward current loss. Unlike rubber and polyurethane, metal spacers offer no additional vibration dampening. The ride on metal spacers is sometimes considered rougher, although it can be no worse than OE setups as the mounting component materials are still considered equal. Metal does make for a rugged, long lasting choice of material for suspension spacer lifts.

Polyurethane – this material is one of the most popular available for spacer lift kits. Polyurethane is often a higher durometer than the rubber equivalent and its excellent chemical resistance properties, have shown they can be almost impervious to fuel, oil, and other road contaminants. Some kits even have a lifetime warranty. Polyurethane as a liquid that can be poured into moulds or almost any shape, then once set it will create a premium spacer. Polyurethane spacers come in many colours as well as a variety of durometers (hardness) or thicknesses. Increasing the spacer hardness can make them more sensitive to tearing if overloaded. Polyurethane has excellent abrasion resistance and the ability to machine the final product to exact dimensions does create a premium spacer.

When it comes to a simple coil spring spacer lift, we recommend polyurethane over metal and rubber. Polyurethane often looks the best, does not rust, has good chemical resistant properties, and the ride is better. So look for high grade polyurethane if you’re considering a budget coil spring spacer lift kit.

IFS / Strut Front Suspension

For those with IFS front suspension looking for an economical, small / moderate lift, then maybe a strut spacer may be for you. Metal - coil strut spacers, generally bolt in between a coil strut top hat and the strut mount on the chassis, spacing the entire assembly down. As the strut remains basically unchanged, full articulation within the limits of the bumpstops is preserved. A word of caution though - When strut spacer kits are fitted above the top mount assembly it can create over-extended down-travel (droop). This over-extension can cause ball joint, CV joint and/or component damage. When strut spacer kits are fitted above the top mount assembly the shock assembly can bottom out before the lower control arm reaches the bump stop. This can possibly lead to major structural damage and/or complete shock failure. Ideally, any IFS suspension lift should be done in conjunction with an appropriate diff drop kit to help preserve CV and axle life.

So, if you’re just looking to get your 4WD lifted a couple of inches as quickly and cheaply as possible, then spacers could be just what you need. If cost isn’t a factor and you’re looking for better performance, increased safety and handling, then check out a custom coil-spring replacement or a full suspension kit. For more information or help with either option, contact Superior Engineering and let their technical sales team assist you in selecting the right parts for your 4WD.