

FOUR WHEELER

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Bilstein B8 8100 series install on a 2017 Toyota Tacoma TRD Off-Road

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Our '17 Toyota Tacoma TRD Off-Road has treated us well over the past year and a half and 46,000 miles of ownership, but once it's loaded up with a bed full of camping gear and enough supplies for a seven-day trip, the stock suspension is simply overwhelmed. What started out as a midsize truck that was light on its feet when empty, now feels bloated and lethargic when fully loaded, lumbering around corners and bottoming out on the smallest of bumps.

Bilstein has a cure for the boat-an-

chor blues—its new B8 8100 series direct fitment suspension system for the '05-'18 Toyota Tacoma. All four corners of the vehicle have been specifically engineered with a uniquely tuned shock, taking into consideration the exact weight measurements on each corner. The front and rear shocks each have left- and right-hand-side delineation and have a preset lift height depending on drive-type, engine, cab, bed, and year range.

The front B8 8112 (ZoneControl CR) shocks consist of a shock

absorber and coil-spring assembly, with motorsports racing-derived position-sensitive damping technology built in. ZoneControl offers an internal 2-inch hydraulic two-stage compression stop and a 1-inch internal rebound stop. The triple-piston design offers three compression valving stages and two rebound valving stages, giving the vehicle an incredible highway and off-road ride, soaking up anything in its path. Front ride height can be adjusted 0.5-2.5 inches, with a threaded spring seat lock ring and supplied spanner wrench.



The rear B8 8100 (bypass) shocks are also position-sensitive damped and look like they came off a Baja Trophy Truck. The twin-tube external bypass design features “incremental flow” bypass adjusters, allowing you to adjust the ride of your truck depending on the amount of gear and added weight loaded in the bed. When the going gets rough with unexpected G-outs, the shock utilizes a bottom hose remote-reservoir exit port for increased compression control at full

suspension cycle that eliminates the need for a hydraulic bumpstop.

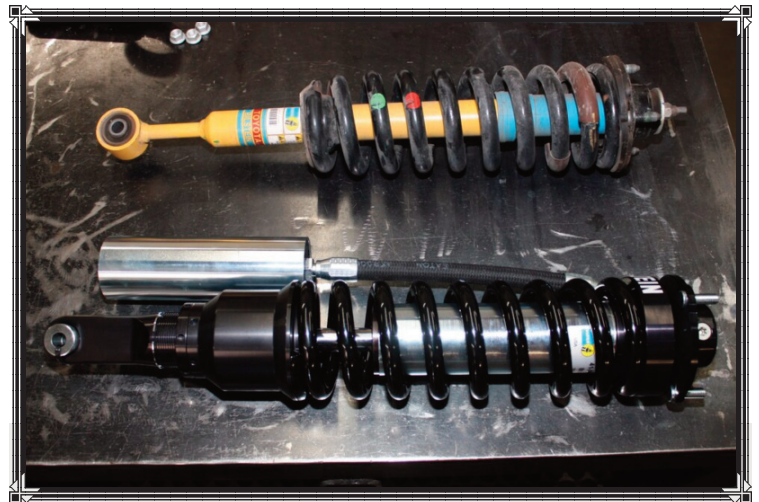
Last, but not least, we installed a set of Deaver Spring rear leaf-spring packs to help control the rear of the truck with the additional weight and also to give us an additional 2 inches of lift for ground clearance and bigger tires. Deaver Spring offers three stages of rear leaf-spring options for additional weight capacity: Stage I is good for 0-300 pounds, Stage II

for 400-600 pounds, and Stage III for 700-1,000 pounds. All three stages offer approximately 2 inches of overall lift height. For our Taco, we went with the Stage II, which will help haul our bed full of goodies.

Now our Tacoma rides, handles, and performs great, whether loaded or unloaded. Follow along as we cover the truck’s transformation.



The new Bilstein B8 8100 series shocks are a piece of art, worthy of hanging on a wall in your living room. The front and rear remote reservoirs are 60 mm in length for increased fluid capacity and improved cooling. Built with aerospace-quality components in the USA, the machined aluminum parts are zinc-coated to resist the harsh elements that Mother Nature is sure to throw at you



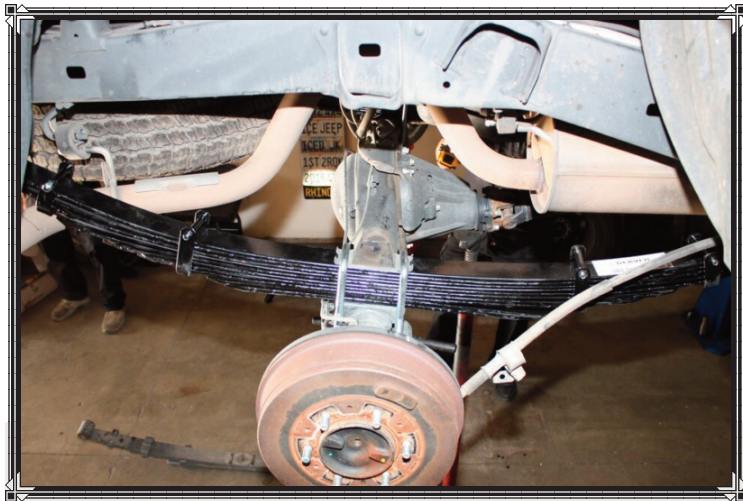
Side by side, you can see how much beefier the B8 8100 (ZoneControl CR) shocks are compared to the factory Bilstein shocks that were included on our Tacoma. The remote reservoir allows for a lot more fluid to cycle through the shock body, while keeping oil temps cooler and decreasing the chances of bottoming out on harsh bumps.



After unbolting the front spindle from the upper control arm, we removed the factory shocks and then installed the B8 8100 shocks using the factory hardware. For our vehicle configuration, the B8 8112s were set from the factory with 1.4 inches of lift. When the truck is unloaded, the rear end sits slightly higher than the front; with a full load of gear in our bed, the truck sits level.



The front B8 8112 shocks include a factory sway bar spacer, which also doubles as the front reservoir mount. Once bolted up, the reservoir is located up and out of harm's way -- clear of any moving parts, and it won't contact the tire at full steering lock.



We removed the factory rear leaf springs and bolted in the Deaver Spring Stage II spring packs. The Stage II springs offer approximately 2 inches of additional lift, plus they increase the carrying capacity of our cargo bed by 400-600 pounds.



The rear B8 8100 shocks bolt directly to the factory locations and each includes an aluminum anodized reservoir chassis mount, which bolts through existing holes in the frame of the truck. The B8 8100 shocks are specifically designed for the Deaver Spring leaf springs.



A portion of the rear inner fender liner requires a trimming to accommodate the reservoir. Here, a template is drawn and then cut out.



The B8 8100's machined aluminum twin external bypass tubes are absolutely gorgeous and are full adjustable, with multiple compression (in blue) and rebound (in red) settings. The remote-reservoir exit port, in the upper right of the image, helps settle the hard impacts at full compression bypass tube, increases bottoming control and eliminates the need for a hydraulic bumpstop.



Adjusting the compression of rebound settings of the B8 81--s is as easy as loosening up a jam nut from the bypass adjuster housing and dialing it in with a hex key. There are 10 rotational adjustments for compression and rebound and you can fine-tune your trucks ride with a 1/4, 1/2, or full turn. Turn clockwise to increase damping and counterclockwise to decrease. Then, tighten up the jam nut and you are ready to hit the dirt.



Now that our chassis has been upgraded to heavy-duty levels, we felt that our cargo bed was in need of more support too. So, we bolted up Total Chaos Fabrication's Tacoma Rear Channel Bed Stiffeners, which help reinforce the factory rear bed channels near the tailgate that can fatigue over time with heavy off-road use and/or the added weight of items like cargo racks and camper shells.



To complement our project, we installed a set of SOTA Offroad D.R.T. 17x8.5-inch wheels with non-beadlock rings. Each D.R.T. aluminum wheel has a 2,600-pound wheel load rating. Finally, we mounted up a set of LT265/70R17 Nitto Tire Ridge Grapplers, which offer a hybrid tread pattern, smackdab in the middle of a mud-terrain and all-terrain tire. The aggressive-looking yet quiet-riding Ridge Grapplers work well in the dirt and deliver a long tread life. **FW**

Sources

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Total Chaos Fabrication
951-737-9682
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