

# The Preventive Maintenance Series

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## Rear Strut Rod Installation on Late Models

Anytime a transaxle is installed back in a car the axles and the two sets of struts need to be reattached. There are suggestions from several sources on how to best accomplish attaching the rear struts and all of them help. Not all suspensions react the same way due to spring settlement, shock bushings and trailing arm bushing condition. If you use nylon bushings on the rear struts it is best to use them only in the inner bracket so that the outer rubber can allow for twisting. The following installation procedure is what works for me with notes from others included. The instructions and picture apply to the driver's side, the passenger side bolt numbering will be just the opposite

1. I attach the axles to the differential side first then use a come-along hooked to the lower shock mounts to pull the suspension towards the axles until the U-joints fit and the bolts can easily be installed. The '66 and later models have longer U-Joint bolts which makes installation a little easier and you may not need the come-along.
2. Raise the suspension with a floor jack under the tire (parking brake on tight) or under the bottom of the shock mount until the suspension is at riding height. You will need to raise and lower the trailing arm to aid in the attachment. The small front strut must be tightened last with the trailing arm at riding height, and if you had the rear struts completely off the car you should leave the two large bolts loose in the mounting brackets. If neither bolt was loosened you can still attached the struts but loosening the inner bolt may help bracket installation without changing camber. A heavy pointed drift pin or similar tool will be necessary and check all of your bolt and hole threads; you will want to start bolts with your fingers to avoid cross threading.
3. Raise the strut until the bracket fits against the differential, you can raise or lower your floor jack under the suspension to aid the line up. Picture looking at the mounting bracket holes at the differential from the driver side: hole #1 is upper left, #2 is lower left, #3 is lower right and #4 is upper right. Install bolt #1 finger tight so the bracket can move under the bolt head. Insert your drift into hole #3 and pull the bracket rearward until you can install bolt #2. Keeping the drift tight and looking at hole #3 to keep it aligned as close as possible, tighten bolt #2 tight. This will leave hole #3 lined up and ready for a bolt. Once #3 is tightened it should have aligned #4. If you left the large bolt loose, tighten #1 and then torque the large bolt which will also help align #4. Once #4 is installed, torque all bolts. The bolt numbering on the passenger side is just opposite.

In some cases the mounting bracket may have been bent slightly and additional effort to line up hole #4 may be necessary:

- If it is only off slightly, you can use a long punch and a heavy hammer to tap the corner area next to hole #4 and bend the bracket slightly to line up the hole.
- If you are using all nylon bushings it is possible you will need to use a large pipe wrench with a floor jack under the handle to aid in line up.

- In the CORSA Tech Guide, Gary Baxter describes using a bottle jack under the bracket at the differential to help line up holes (Suspension Page 26). He also attaches the axle last, raising or lowering the suspension to line up the U-joints.

1

4



2

3

Referenced bolts on the driver's side.