Control Arm Installation

By Ray Fichthorn

Question

I just pulled the control arms off my 62 Daytona, and replaced all the rubber bushings. The steering knuckles were fine, (no play)so I didn't pull them apart. Well, I installed the left side first back on the car. After a three hour of fighting with the two top bolts on the upper control arm to the frame. They are nasty to get the nuts on. Then I started installing the right side, I noticed the upper control arm didn't want to move on steering knuckle. So I greased both fitting good, and kept working the control arm. That didn't help so I loosened the top bolt on the steering knuckle, then oiled it good, and worked it again. But here's my problem. When I tighten the bolt, the control arm doesn't want to move again. The shop manual doesn't tell you how tight the bolt should be. If I leave it on the loose side, then the control arm moves fine. So how tight should the bolt be on the steering knuckle?

Thanks, Charlie

Answer

I'm not sure if you are describing a rebuilt front end, or an old original one....

That "pinch-bolt" located in the middle of the upper kingpin- should be tight. It is not meant to be a pivot point (under driving conditions). Your troubles are in the upper outer control arm bushings. Either the bushings are frozen to the pin (if old), or, someone installed new bushings WITHOUT using a spreader tool. This will create a bind that will only ruin the upper bushings if you drive it that way.

Studebaker's (upper outer and lower outer) control arm bushings.... MUST be installed using the proper spreader tool. This spreader allows the bushing's SPECIAL threads to "float" on the upper and lower pins. (.015" clearance in the threads) For the upper pin, it also allows your upper pin to be used for front-end alignment.

Remove the two upper bushing grease fittings- insert a screwdriver or similar tool to remove any old-packed grease that is in there. Inside the bushings there should be an "ALLEN-TYPE" socket machined into the end of the pin... that you need to insert an allen wrench into- to adjust the upper pin. This socket is only on ONE end of the pin... NOT both.

IF this is an original set of bushings: NOTE: jack the car up by the lower control arm- NOT the frame... this will relieve the pressure on the upper pin. Remove the wheel/tire. Loosen the kingpin pinch-bolt. Heat the upper outer control arm bushings lightly with a propane torch- just to melt the grease and possibly loosen up the bushing on the pin. Do both bushings until you can move the upper pin (fairly) easily with an ALLEN WRENCH. Liberal use of spray lubricant or penetrate .. inside the bushings, and on the pin's eccentric near the pinch-bolt... may help.

IF this is a rebuilt front end... You "may" need to remove one or both upper bushings, and reinstall them using a spreader tool on the control arm. If this tool is not used, you will collapse the control arm around the pin, and create a bind on the pin's threads and the bushings will be chewed up in very short order.