

# McGaughy's 8inch Lift Kit - 2012 Ram 3500

Onward and Upwards

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Each year the truck manufacturers try to outdo each other and come out with a better suspension than the other guys. This keeps aftermarket suspension companies in business, since they have to adapt their kits to the ever-changing trucks coming out of Michigan. One of these companies is McGaughy's. Hailing from Fresno, California, McGaughy's is one of the only companies that offer kits for both lifting and lowering. This means that they have to work twice as hard when it comes to developing new kits for the new trucks.



When McGaughy's approached us about testing out their new 8-inch lift kit for Ram 2500 and 3500 trucks, we jumped at the opportunity. That much fender clearance meant we needed larger wheels and tires. Since the truck we had was a Ram 3500 dualie, we called up one of the elite wheel companies in the dualie wheel scene, American Force. They got us a set of 22x8¼-inch Fusion dualie wheels and a set of 8-lug to 10-lug wheel adapters. Knowing that we wanted a tough-looking truck with off-road-ready tires, we ordered a set of 37-inch Nitto Trail Grapplers. After loading up the truck, we headed over to Total Auto Pros in Phoenix. Their ASE-certified installers were fully capable of getting this Ram lifted in minimal time. Follow along to see how Total Auto Pros gave this Ram dualie a whole new attitude with parts from McGaughys, American Force, and Nitto.

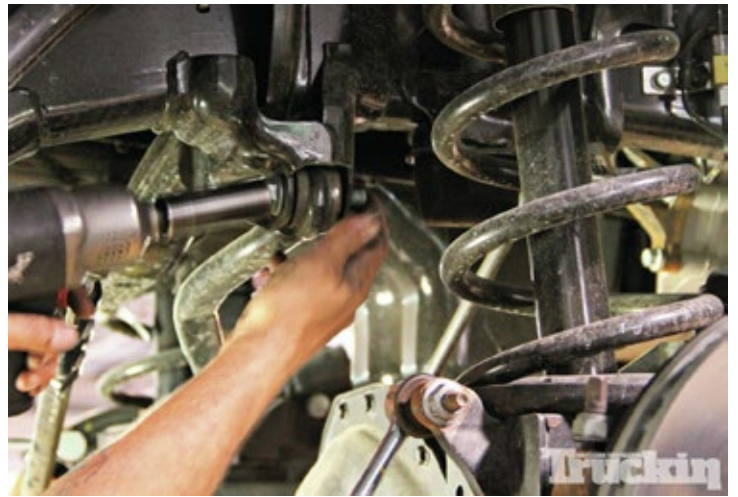




1. We first laid out the McGaughys lift kit (PN: 54950, \$3,412.85) to make sure that all the pieces were accounted for. With everything checked and double-checked, we brought the dualie into the shop bay at Total Auto Pros in Phoenix, and got to work.



2. After getting the truck in the air, we removed the wheels and tires. As we mentioned previously, we ordered a set of American Force 8- to 10-lug wheel adapters, which we will go over later.



3. The first step was to undo the driver-side track bar bolt with an impact gun.

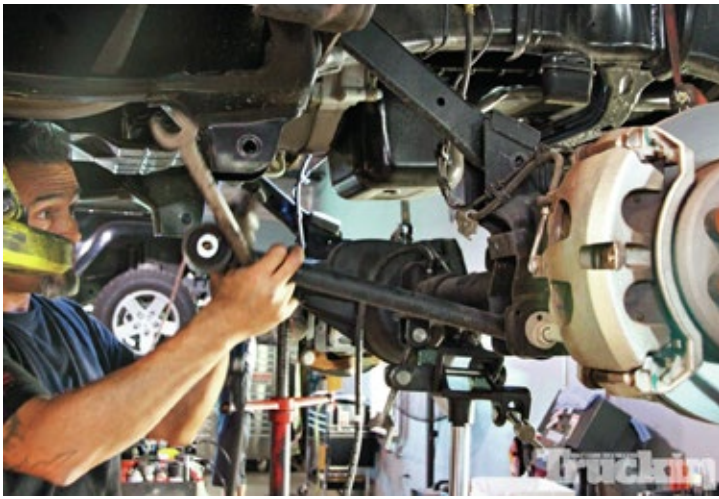


4. With the track bar out of the way, we removed the Pitman arm nut and used a puller to remove the Pitman arm from the steering box. This was thrown in the trash pile since the McGaughys kit comes with a new one.



5. So that the brake lines were not damaged and to give us more room to work, the brake line bracket was unbolted from the front axle with a 13mm wrench.

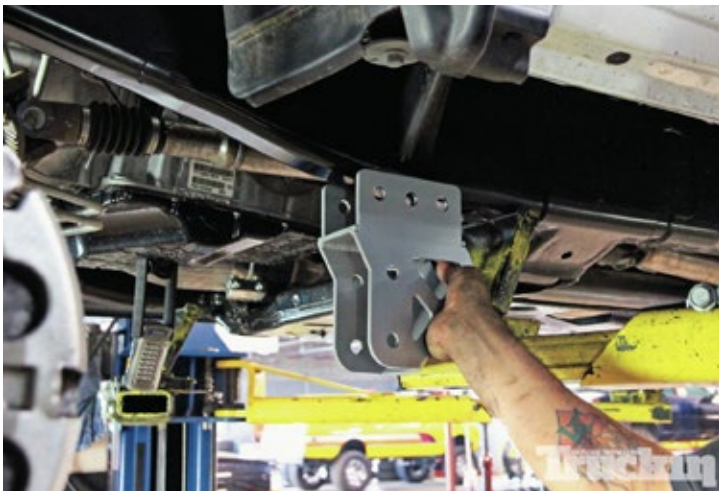




6. Next, the factory radius arms were unbolted using 21mm and 24mm wrenches. These were also placed in the trash heap.



7. Included in the new lift kit was a pair of radius arm drop-down brackets. In order to mount them, the factory brackets needed to be cut off with a cut-off wheel. It is important to note that the frame was not cut, just the welds that held the old bracket on. The remnants of the welds were then ground smooth.



8. This is the new radius arm drop-down bracket. There is an oval hole in the frame and a matching oval hole on the new bracket that needed to be lined up. Then the three holes in the side of the bracket were marked on the frame to be drilled out.



9. A nifty feature of the kit is that it comes with a 5/8-inch hole saw. This makes this step much easier if you are installing it in your driveway without access to a compressor.



10. The new bracket was then bolted to the frame using hardware included in the kit. Not shown here are the sleeves that go into the holes. These sleeves prevent the structural integrity of the frame from being compromised when the bracket is tightened down.

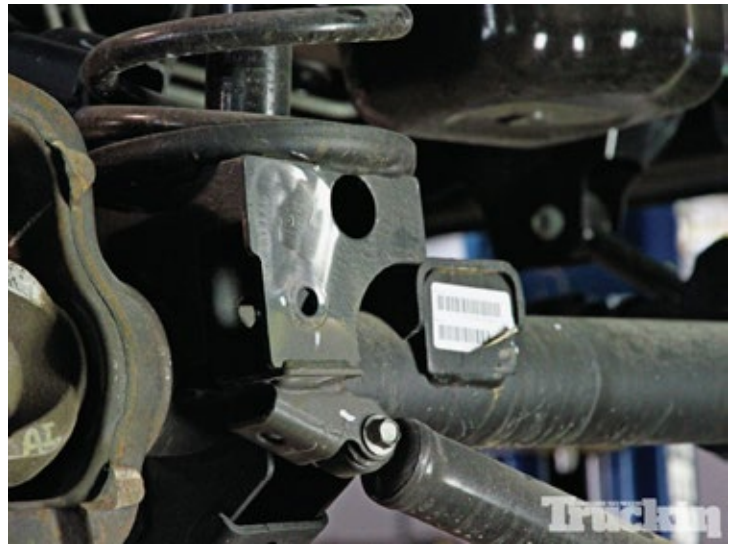


11. Before going any further, we had to install the bushings in the new long arms from the kit. After applying plenty of grease, the bushings were tapped into place with a rubber mallet.





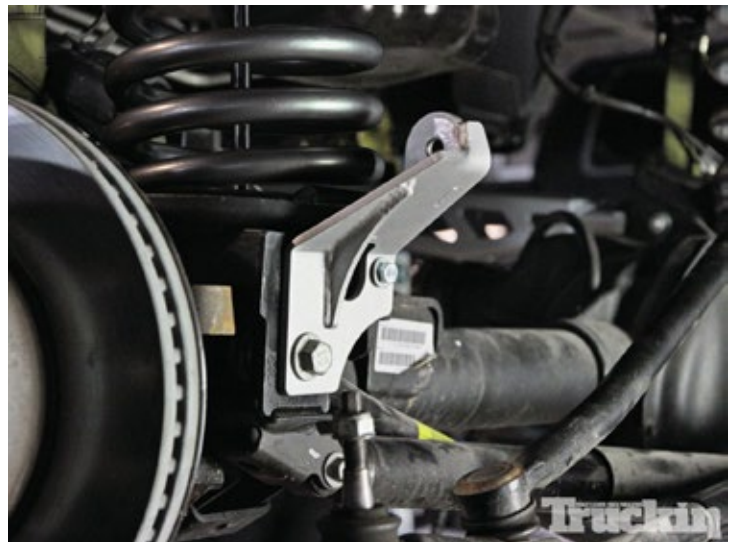
12. After the bushings were installed, the new McGaughys long arms were bolted into the new bracket that was installed earlier.



15. You can see that being careful works wonders. With the bracket gone, the area was ground smooth and made ready for the next step. Its these small details that set Total Auto Pros apart from other shops.



13. Finally, the long arms were bolted into the factory location on the front axle. One of the cool things about this kit is that the long arms have Johnny Joints so that they can be minutely adjusted if need be.



16. As you saw in the previous photo, there was one bolthole already in the mount. The other hole had to be drilled and the sway bar bracket was bolted to the axle.



14. In order to keep the sway bar in the correct orientation, the factory mounting bracket had to be cut off. Again, we made sure to just cut the welds and not the frame.



17. Another hole needed to be drilled in the frame. This one was for the track bar drop-down bracket. Once that was drilled, the bracket was bolted to the frame and was ready to receive the factory track bar.





18. The next step was to install the new shock and coil spring in the factory location. McGaughys includes new shocks in their kit, but we opted to upgrade to Bilstein shocks for even better ride and handling.



21. The rear lift is accomplished with a six-inch fabricated steel lift block that goes between the axle and leaf-spring pack.



19. Since we moved the sway bar endlink mount down, we needed to move the sway bar down away from the frame. Again, the kit included a pair of sway bar relocater brackets to do just that.



22. Rather than use the factory 9/16-inch U-bolts, McGaughys includes four 5/8-inch U-bolts. This means that the upper plate needed to be drilled out. These extra heavy-duty U-bolts will hold up to extreme towing and ensure a long life.

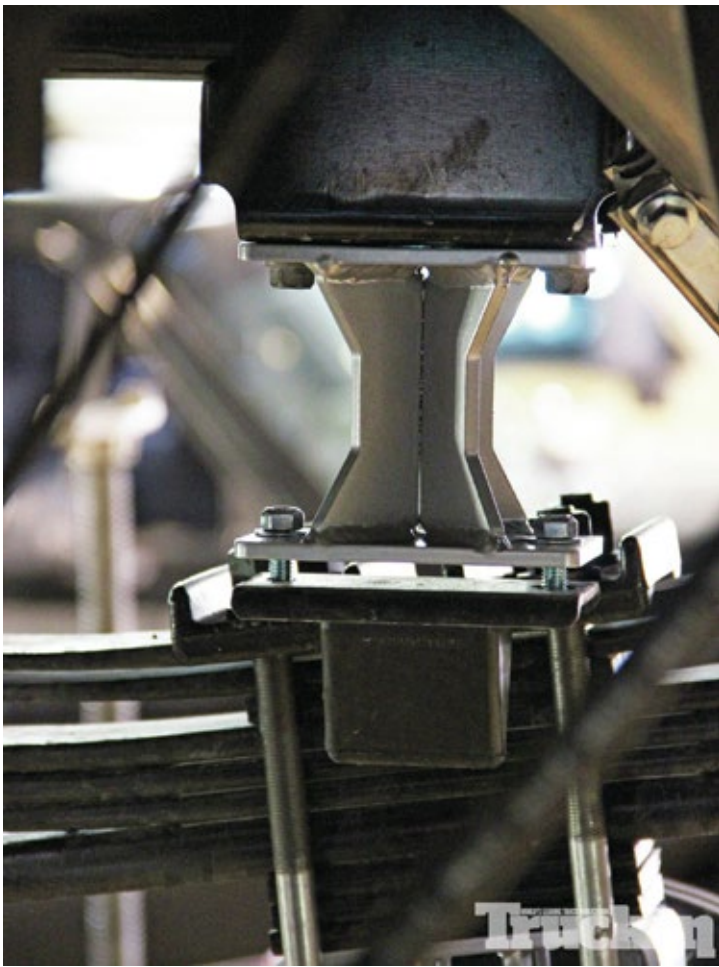


20. With everything installed, the front has a ton more room now. It was then time to move on to the rear.



23. After the holes were drilled out, the new U-bolts and the plate were installed onto the axle and the block was sandwiched down.





24. To give the axle something to hit so the travel doesn't max out, a bumpstop extension brings the bumpstop back down to the factory location.



25. Finally, a new pair of rear Bilstein shocks (optional) was bolted into place and the install was complete.



26. Here is a shot of the American Force 8-lug to 10-lug wheel adapters mounted on the truck.



27. 22x8-inch American Force Fusion wheels (\$4,900 for a set of six) were wrapped in 37x13.50R22 Nitto Trail Grappler tires (\$597 each). This combo gives the 1-ton dualie a big-rig feel and turns heads like no other.



28. The 37-inch-tall tires with the 22-inch wheels look great under the 8-inch lifted dualie. Note the silver powdercoat on the McGaughys long arm adding class, while the unique design provides a true custom look.