Resist the Roll With CPP

BALANCE ACT

One of the first upgrades on a new project car is usually the engine. Seriously, everyone is quick to make the car faster, namely with cam upgrades, head swaps, and sometimes even a little hit of nitrous–and in our line of work, we like that idea. Still, with all the added power comes the need to harness it all and make sure everything works in unison. Bad days can come quickly when you go from a sloppy six-cylinder to a small-block and don't plan well enough in advance for the hardware to keep your sled on the road or the track. Don't get us wrong, we love to dive in and start wrenching for more power, but suspension components are critical and will require your attention too.

Most suspension mods are simple upgrades and don't take anything more than Editor H's milk crate of tools to get the job done. The best part: These suspension systems are mostly bolt-on and can be added to your project car over a weekend. This way you get your car back on the road for a sweet drive in to work on Monday.

In an effort to get this project Nova roadworthy and up to snuff as far as suspension components are concerned, we gave Classic Performance Products in Anaheim, California, a buzz for a quick and simple upgrade from the factory. CPP recommended its front/rear sway bar kits. The front bar comes in at a massive 1 1/8 inches and the rear measures in at 7/8 inch. These kits come with everything you need to get the job done and include new bushings and hardware. We also picked up four new Bilstein shocks because our factory Delco units from GM were blown and wouldn't react to anything less than a cliff. Then we got down and dirty in the driveway for a little teardown. With these easy upgrades, the Nova feels better than factory fresh.

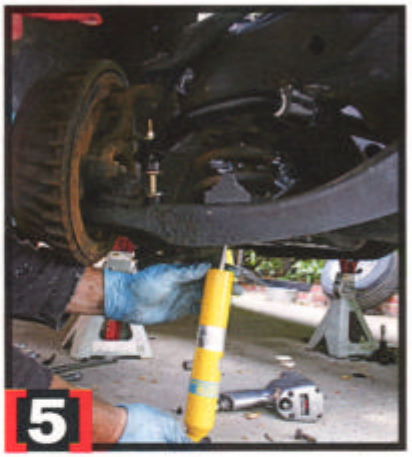
QUICK NOTES

WHAT WE DID
Added front/rear sway bars and shocks from CPP

BOTTOM LINE
Rid this Nova of roll and bounce

PRICE (APPROX)
$650

STEP BY STEP



1. We started by placing the Nova up on four jackstands and removing the front tires. Then, using a 9/16-inch box wrench and a 9/16-inch socket on the air ratchet, we removed the bolt holding the sway bar links together. We followed up and removed the driver-side bolt as well. Once we released the bolts holding the sway bar to the frame brackets, we could free the factory sway bar.

2. With the factory unit and hardware gone, we prepared the new stuff from CPP. It took some massaging and patience, but we got the front bar in. We used a bit of white grease on the front frame bushings to eliminate squeak and bolted up the mounts to each side of the frame.

3. Following the factory setup and CPP's instructions, we got the new bushings and washers lined up to create our end links. We tied in the end of the sway bar with the bolts and lock nuts and fastened it down. The same procedure applies to the opposite side.

4. The front shocks are easy to replace. We simply removed the two smaller bolts from under the lower A-arm. Then, using an impact gun with a 9/16-inch socket, we spun the top shock nut off and removed the old Delco pieces.

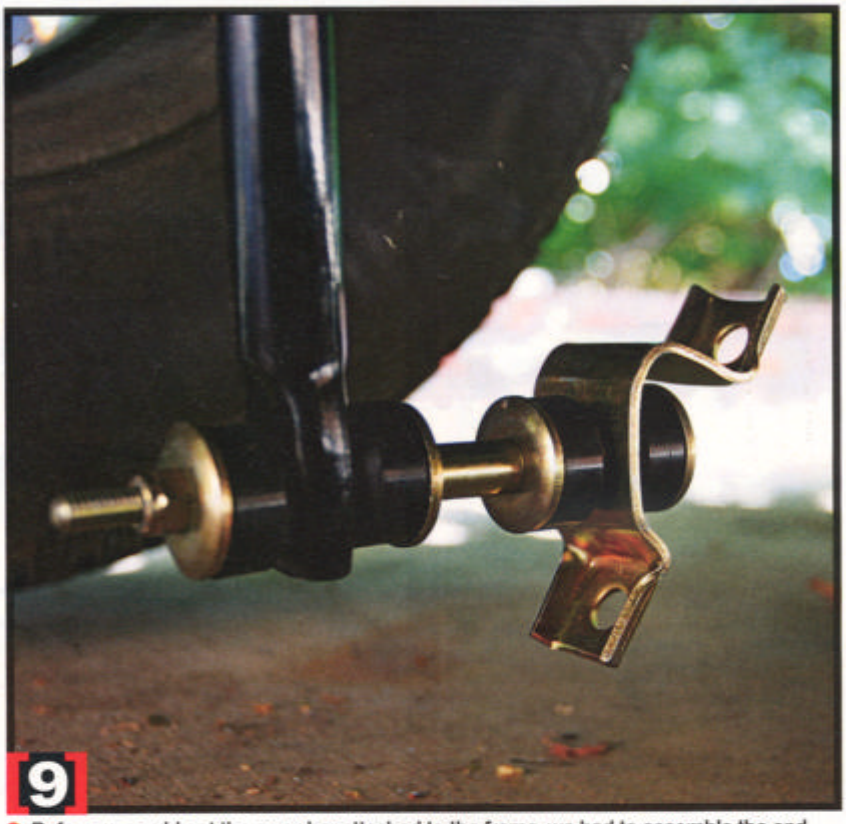
5. Next, we slid in our new units from Bilstein and locked them down with the factory hardware on the bottom. Don't worry about retaining the old stuff, as new bushings and nuts are included.

6. Moving along, we began to attack the rear by adding the sway bar upgrade. First, we cleared the brake line out of the way and hung the U-bolts over the rear axlehousing.

7. Using white grease, we slipped the D-bushings over the sway bar and met them up with the rest of the axle-mounting bracketry. This included stacking the locking device, the baseplate, and the bar bracket. We hand-tightened the nuts on both sides of the axle, which gave us a little wiggle room for when we later installed the end links.

STEP BY STEP

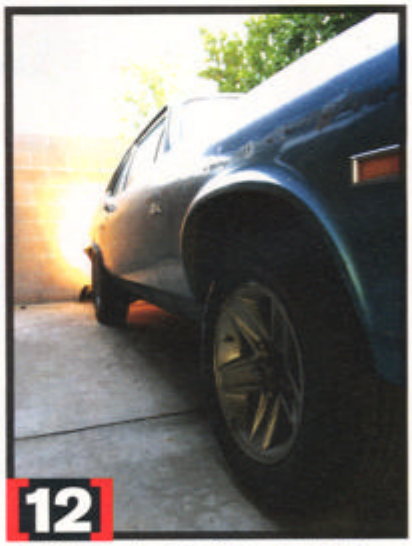
8. To line up the end links, we had to drop the chassis back to the ground and off the jacks. From there we could swing the bar and match up the ends to the frame. After marking where the end links would line up, we drilled two 3/8-inch holes into the frame.



9. Before we could get the sway bar attached to the frame, we had to assemble the end links on the bar. We first stacked the bushings, the spacer tube, and the bracket together. Next, we ran the supplied bolt through the whole unit with the threads of the bolt facing toward the ground.

10. After placing the Nova back up on jackstands, we ran the supplied U-bolts through the frame. This U-bolt will fasten the entire sway bar together and make this system a complete assembly. At this point, we began tightening everything up and spacing out things like the hardware over the axles.

11. The rear shocks are a cinch. We unbolted them from their top mounts and released them from the bottom. Then all we had to do was bolt the new Bilstein units from CPP back into place.



12. Not only does our Nova now resist its tendency for rollover, but the tires remain firmly planted, giving us a lot more confidence commuting through L.A. traffic and making those canyon runs that much more exciting.

GET THE HOOKUP

CLASSIC PERFORMANCE PRODUCTS
800.522.5004 • classicperform.com