



MOPAR UPGRADES ON A BUDGET

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CLASSIC PERFORMANCE PRODUCTS
SOLVES YOUR SAD BRAKES AND
SUSPENSION ISSUES

Simplicity, increased rigidity, improved handling, cost savings, good looks, reliability, and safety—you can't say no to any of these things when rebuilding the front end of a classic muscle car.

Classic Performance Products (CPP) offers everything you'll ever need to upgrade your classic muscle car's suspension and brakes, and it also offers complete kits to rebuild with all new stock components for the purists. When it came time to sort out the brakes and suspension under the front of our subject street/strip 1972 Dodge Challenger, the staff at Classic Performance Products was eager to assist and got us pointed in the right direction.



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UPPER CONTROL ARMS: TOTALLY TUBULAR

Like every Mopar of the era, this Challenger came from the factory with a torsion bar front suspension including stamped steel upper and lower control arms. While that might be sufficient for a straight-six-powered, grocery-getting cruiser, our Challenger is destined for bigger things with 650+ HP of 440 big-block under the hood. You'll recall that build if you've been a reader since our May 2013 issue. Knowing that we would be pushing the limits of the stock suspension, we wanted to beef up the stock upper control arms for reliability, and looks, and the tubular upper control arms from CPP were our weapon of choice.

The control arms come with increased positive caster gain built into them to provide the driver with more stability and tracking at high speeds. For the benefits of this design change, we consulted with CPP's Senior Tech Aaron Strietzel.

"Typical installations run between 3 and 5 degrees positive caster. By adding this caster, these arms increase drivability and promote steering return more than factory geometry settings. It's also perfect for power steering upgrades."

CPP's arms feature high-temperature, self-lubricating D-Spec bushings that are designed to remove suspension flex. Strietzel says these are low friction, require no grease, never squeak, and do not wear out. Once installed they will provide maintenance free operation for years. CPP also uses factory Mopar replacement ball joints, making replacements readily available if needed.

These arms are truly quality pieces both in appearance and construction, as all CPP Tubular arms are TIG-welded and fixture-built. The upper pivot barrels are beefy pieces made from 1 1/2-inch x 3/16-inch-wall DOM steel tube. To add even more strength, the ball joint mounts are CNC-machined to maintain a precise tolerance and fit. Finalizing a quality tough construction, the tubes are 1 3/4-inch x 1/8-inch-wall tubing and are finished in a smooth and durable black powdercoated finish. The end result is a dependably strong and direct bolt-in upgrade that we were eager to install.

Leading up to installation, our Challenger had been in the shop getting a fresh coat of paint, and sitting on raised casters for over a year. Needless to say, we were extremely excited to get it back on the ground. We cleaned up the stock components that we would be reusing, and painted them gloss black to blend in with the great black powdercoated look of the new control arms. Installation was extremely simple and painless. Without any headaches, we hung the control arms using our stock camber bolts and readied for the next step in our front-end reconstruction.



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DISC BRAKE KITS: FROM DUST CAP TO SPINDLE

Whether you are sticking with stock equipment, or want to turn your ride into a radical street/strip beast, CPP puts several options at your fingertips. For our machine, we chose to go with an upgraded CPP stock-appearing setup with a power brake booster, and drilled/slotted rotors.

These kits conveniently come from CPP at a different level of pre-assembly than we are used to. CPP prides itself on pre-assembling as much as they can before packaging. The wheel bearings even come out of the box prepacked with grease!

"Compared to other kits on the market, CPP goes a step further. We pre-assemble and pre-grease all bearings then torque all hardware so you, the end user, can simply bolt the whole assembled wheel kit onto your control arms and be ready to bleed and go," said Strietzel. "On top of the company's convenient preassembly, CPP's kits have everything needed to complete your brake kit installation, including hoses to connect to your existing brake hard lines on the frame. If you purchase a full power-brake system like ours, CPP also includes the vacuum booster, master cylinder, proportioning valve and hardware to connect them to the firewall."

After pulling the spindle nuts, and attaching our new Moog steering arms/ lower ball joints to the beautiful new spindles that CPP provided, all that was left was to install the loaded spindles onto the control arms. With a helping hand, we muscled the eye-catching rotors and loaded calipers into their new home under the wheel wells of our Challenger.

The master cylinder and booster came set up for our specific application and thanks to a provided adapter it bolted right up to our firewall. The whole process was rather effortless thanks to great forethought from CPP in providing all of the hardware, new stainless brake lines, and even brake fitting retaining clips. Classic Performance Products really supplied an all-inclusive and easily installed disc brake kit.



THE TAKEAWAY

CPP's dedication to quality doesn't stop at the sale. Strietzel wanted to note that, "We have a full tech staff that is here to assist with any questions you have, as well as a full online library of technical articles on our website. We are true car people that have experience with our products and their installation. We are here to help!"

After eyeing the suspension adjustments to a point we felt comfortable with, we were finally able to drop our Mopar beast back on its wheels after over a year of sitting on casters. After we get the stout running gear installed, we're excited for our next stop to be the alignment shop!

CPP offers affordable ways for all muscle car owners to upgrade suspension, beef up your brakes, and even swap engines! In addition to their performance big brake kits offered for Chevy, Ford and other makes, CPP has a complete line of full performance upgrade kits available to transform the handling and ride quality of your muscle car.



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