

# Replace your shock absorbers and restore your original ride

Replacing shock absorbers is something we rarely think about, but as vehicles are lasting longer, sometimes several hundred thousand miles, you can reclaim some of the original “ride” by replacing them. For a car it may be an optional decision for a while, but for a truck it may be a “must do” in order to carry or pull a load safely. Replacing shocks is part of routine maintenance and should be a planned expense. This is important to consider if you recently purchased a used vehicle or have a vehicle that you plant to keep for several more years.



Shock absorber design varies depending on the vehicle design and purpose

## What do shock absorbers do?

Shock absorbers have two basic purposes as a part of your vehicle. Both are very important. They control the movement of the suspension and springs. They also keep the tires in direct contact with the road surface.

Shock absorbers effect the ride of your vehicle. When you first buy your vehicle, one of the characteristics you

evaluate is the ride; how the vehicle reacts when you go over a bump, a speed bump, a pot hole or grooves in a highway. Generally you want a “smooth” ride. As the shock absorbers “wear” over time or actually break, your ride becomes less desirable.

Some signs your vehicle needs to have the shock absorbers replaced include, uneven tire wear, vibrations, longer stopping distance, rattling and rocking over bumps, nose dives and swerves during breaking, or in mild wind it veers and slides.

### **When to replace shocks?**

From reading several articles about when to replace shock absorbers, it is recommended to evaluate your ride more than a recommended milage interval such as 50,000 miles. Most shock absorbers are designed to last longer than that. However, as your vehicle approaches 100,000 miles, you should start to evaluate your ride to see if it can be improved. For a truck owner, you need to evaluate how the truck is used. If it is used lightly the shocks will last longer, but if you are carrying a lot of heavy loads or pulling a trailer, the shocks should be replaced more often. You would not want to have a shock failure while hauling or pulling a load.

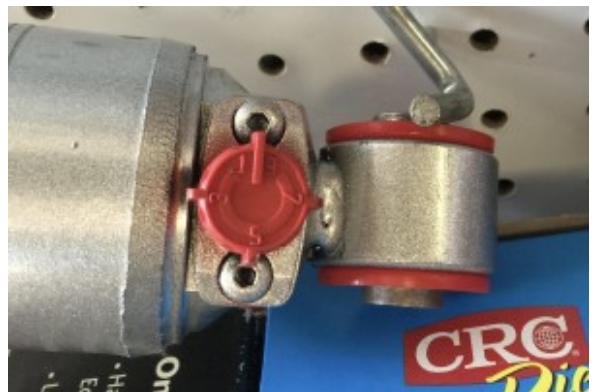
Most shocks can be replaced at a car dealer with original equipment, a car care center, or you can replace your own, if you have the tools and know how to do it. There is no alignment required after replacing shocks on most vehicles. There may be a price advantage having your shocks replaced at a car care center, based on our experience.



Some shock absorbers are adjustable

### **Adjustable Shocks:**

We recently decided to have our shocks replaced on a 3/4 ton Ford F-250 pick-up truck (4 wheel drive) with 125,000 miles. The shocks were not causing a real problem for this lightly used truck, however we anticipated fully loading the truck and driving it about 2000 miles. Since we wanted this lightly used truck to have a smooth ride loaded and a smooth ride unloaded, we decided install adjustable shocks. We chose the same brand as the original equipment, with the adjustable option. There are settings from 1 to 9. A setting of 1 – 3 for no load or a light load and settings of 7 – 9 for heavy loads or towing. The medium settings for medium loads. The adjustment is made manually on the shocks we purchased. We pre-ordered the shocks from an off road specialty shop and they did the installation as well. The local Ford® dealership did not seem informed about options outside original equipment.



This shock absorber adjusts  
from 1 – 9

We encourage you to think about the status of your shock absorbers and plan for their replacement in your routine maintenance schedule.