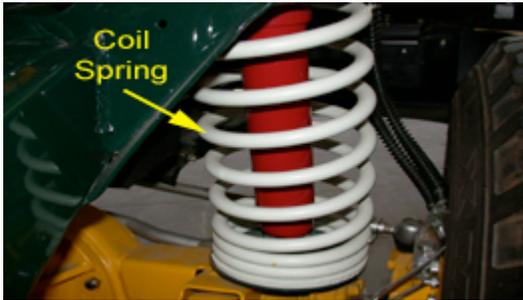




Steering & Suspension: Springs



Description: Automobiles and light trucks use different types of springs, depending on the suspension design. The coil spring is most common, and may be used at both the front and rear. The leaf spring is the oldest type of spring and is most commonly used at the rear. The torsion bar, although not a traditional spring, is used on the front of some cars and light trucks. Some vehicles have air suspension systems and use air springs, which combine a coil spring and a flexible air chamber.

Purpose: Springs support the weight of the vehicle and allow the suspension system to move and adapt to road irregularities, compressing when the wheels hit a bump and expanding when the wheels encounter a dip. Vehicles with air springs also have the ability to change ride height based on driving conditions.

Maintenance Tips/Suggestions: Springs weaken gradually over time and may sag, causing your car's ride height to drop. Springs can also break as they age. Ride height influences steering and suspension operation, so it's important to have it checked along with a thorough visual inspection of the springs. Have this done once a year, at the same time as a wheel alignment. Weak or damaged springs can cause bottoming out, abnormal tire wear, improper handling and increased wear of steering and suspension parts. You may want to consider upgrading the springs on your vehicle to increase its load-carrying abilities. These springs provide increased capacity without affecting ride quality. If your car needs its MacPherson struts replaced, it may also be a good time to replace the coil springs. Since they usually need to be removed when changing struts, you can save labor costs by installing new springs at the same time. For the best handling, ride and performance, have your vehicle's steering and suspension system maintained by a qualified service professional.