

# Streetable Silverado Part I

## BRINGING A DATED CUSTOM TRUCK INTO THE MODERN AGE



**TIMES ARE TOUGH.** The economy is in the crapper, unemployment is on the rise and the words “recession” and “depression” are being thrown about casually. It’s rough going for the average custom truck guy, which makes building the next project even more difficult. So what options are there?

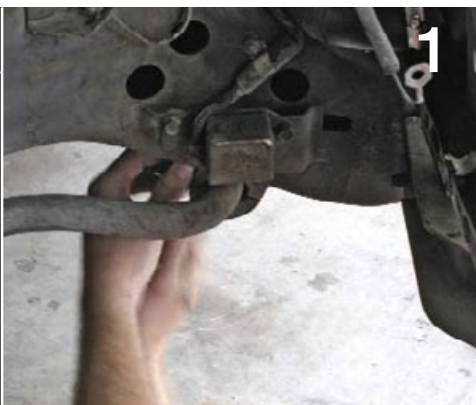
The '88-'98 Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra trucks have become cheaper and cheaper in recent days, and when gas prices soared this past summer, prices on big- and small-block trucks dropped dramatically, making the old body-style Chevy an attractive option. That’s why we decided to build one for our next project truck.

This ride is going to be a full build. We’re going to start off on the suspension, building a top-notch, reliable setup that will take up the largest chunk of the budget, then work on the exterior a little bit with some homegrown shaving and bodywork. When it’s all said and done we’ll have a full custom truck for only a little bit of cash.

The truck in question is a 1995 Chevrolet Silverado already lowered 4/6

that we picked up for \$4,000 and a handshake from our buddy Big Scott. It’s a fully loaded truck complete with a posi rear end, power accessories and a 350 cubic-inch V8. It’s got a ton of miles, but it’s been meticulously cared for over the past 13 years, and it even came with an envelope full of receipts for every part, oil change and sales slip spent on the truck. We even got the SOLD sign from the original purchase back in '94. Then we traded some parts left in the garage for a set of 20-inch Centerlines. Right now the only other money we’ve got into the truck is cash spent on an oil change and a new fuel pump.

With the help of the crew at Lowboy Motorsports we decided to take Thanksgiving weekend and lay out the truck with a KP Components 6-link and new Lay Arms upper and lower control arms combined with Viair compressors, Slam Specialties bags and parts from AVS. In just a few – very long – days, we got the truck dragging frame and riding like a dream. Follow along as we take this truck from a mid-'90s sport truck and turn it into a 21st-century dream ride. ■



*With the truck secured on jackstands and the fenders and hood removed, Todd from Lowboy Motorsports started on the suspension by removing the sway bar. This will be reinstalled later.*

Next the spindle nut holding on the rotor was removed as well as the caliper.



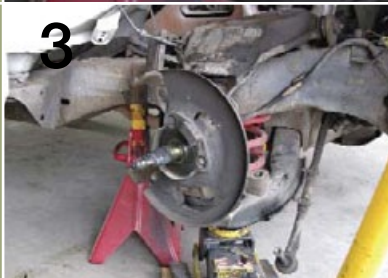
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Using a plasma cutter, Todd carefully cut out the pocket.

A jack was then placed under the lower control arm to allow the spindle to be removed while keeping the spring compressed.



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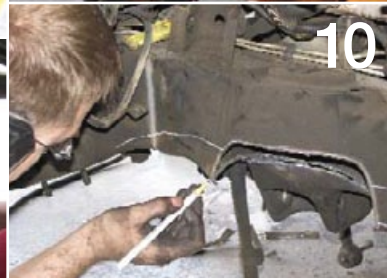
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The stock frame curls in for the spring, and clearance has to be made for that as well. The plasma cutter does this easily, but a grinder and sawzall could be used also with a little bit of finesse.

After the bolts were removed connecting the upper and lower control arm to the spindle, the jack was lowered and both the spindle and spring were removed.



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The frame has to be notched for both the lower control arm side towards the cab and the tie rods. Todd has a unique way of doing this, which he starts by marking out where to cut on the frame.

The upper control arm was then unbolted from the frame and placed to the side.



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A pie-shaped notch was then cut out of the frame using a plasma cutter.

The lower control arm was unbolted and placed to the side as well.



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The frame is then marked for clearance for the airbag.



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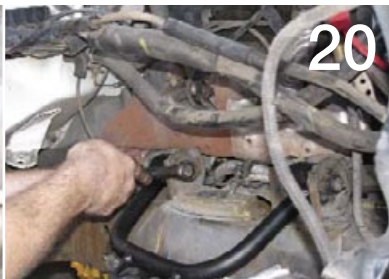
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Using some finesse and a BFH, Todd beat the lower portion of the frame so that the pie shaped hole was closed up.

With everything together, Todd welded up the frame. The frame now has enough clearance for the lower control arms, the tie rods and the airbags, as well as allowing enough room to tuck a 22-inch wheel.



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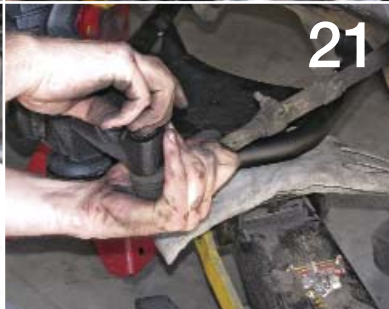


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Next Todd bolted in the KP Components Lay Arm upper control arm using the stock bolts and alignment cams.



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The steering tie rods are bolted to the spindle.

Once the frame was ground down smooth, it looked as good as stock and just as strong. It also looks a ton better than just notching for the arms individually.



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The bag and upper cup assembly are then bolted into the frame and lower control arm.

On the bench the upper cup was bolted to the Slam Specialties bag and the fitting is tightened inside of the cup.



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Using a 22-inch wheel that we borrowed from a friend, we tested everything out for clearance. We could get away with beating back the firewall to lay frame, but since we're planning on body-dropping the truck soon, we decided to leave it alone. It'll work fine with our 20s.

The new KP Components Lay Arms lower control arms were bolted to the frame.



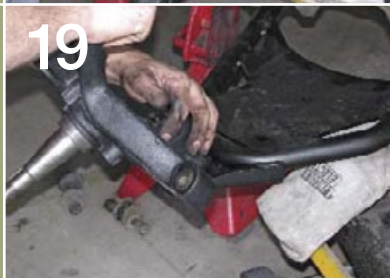
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On the right is the KP Components bolt-in shock mount, and on the left is the unit we had to modify to clear the pie-cut frame. It was bolted to the frame using the large hole in the frame as a guide and then the shock was mounted up.

The new drop spindle is next and was bolted to the lower control arm using new castle nuts.

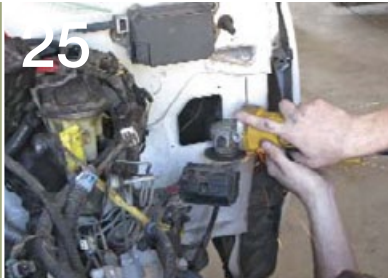


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*This is where the engine harness connects to the interior harness, which hits the tire when the truck is laid out. Todd cuts out the sheetmetal around the hole so that he can relocate it.*



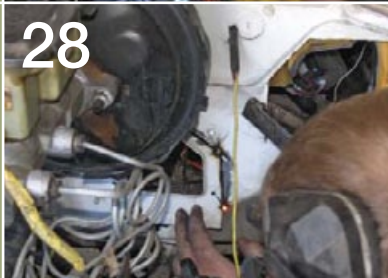
*The patch piece was traced onto a piece of sheetmetal then cut out so we can fill the hole we just cut.*



*We cut out an area below the stock booster that matches the panel we removed.*



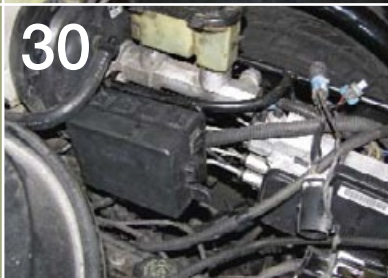
*The piece was then tacked in, as was the filler piece. This gave us the clearance we needed for the wheels.*



*Todd made a cool bracket to hold the ABS module, fuse box and charcoal canister out of some 1/2-inch round tubing and the stock ABS bracket.*



*The bracket was mounted to the firewall and the stock booster.*



*We also relocated the coolant reservoir from the firewall on the passenger side to the core support on the driver's side.*



*With the fender on a stand, Todd tacked in the new inner fender.*



*Once the fender was tacked in place, the stock inner fender was cut out with a cut off wheel.*



*Then Todd secured it some more with a few additional tack welds on the inside of the new fender.*



*Finally, Todd laid down some seam sealer to clean up everything. Stay tuned next month when we finish off the rear of the truck and install the KP 6-link.*