

Jeep Hospital



Each month Dr Jeep (Tony Whitehead) takes us through the trials and tribulations at his "Jeep Hospital", USA 4X4 Jeep Specialist in Melbourne, Victoria. Over 20 Jeeps are admitted weekly for servicing and suspension work through to differential, transmission and engine rebuilds. Dr Jeep explains the diagnosis, the corrective surgery and future care of these vehicles.



Dr Jeep behind the wheel of Neil Goodridge's army Jeep

It's been another busy month here at the hospital, sick Jeeps everywhere and others in for cosmetic surgery. In between there was a road trip for Doctor and Nurse Jeep to the National Jeep Jamboree in NSW. What a great event the Cherokee Club of Australia ran, we were a silver sponsor and gave away a few prizes including a deep cycle optima battery and a set of the new 999 Ranchos and the latest remote in-cab. Only trouble was that we never got the name of the fella that won the Rancho prize, but I have photo of him! So if that guy can call us to claim his \$1182 worth of Rancho prizes you have till the end of the year!



Nurse Jeep (centre) with Nicole and Vicki

JK SUSPENSION

Something to watch on the JK Wrangler is the right rear wheel contacting the rear sway bar at full droop when a lift is fitted and stock wheels and tyres are retained. We have been experimenting with many versions of the lift and refitting several rigs that have been done elsewhere. All the American kits stipulate to run a deeper dish rim or wheel spacers on OEM wheels. Wheel spacers are deemed illegal (check your state's laws) so we need to think about wheels, and are only allowed to go 25mm wider in track each side, that's just enough to do the job and not hang a wheel out too far. The Victorian road rule is that the tread of the tyre must be within the wheel flare in a straight line, not the side wall as some people think, so with the right wheel selection we can avoid this tyre contact at full droop. Rear extended links are also required to correct the reach and a RHD rear track arm bracket to relieve the pull to the passenger side at full droop. We fit the drivers' side link inboard to help with



Teraflex 2 inch lift kit. Front shock absorber and spacer

clearance. The Teraflex 2" kit is an easy cheap way to lift a JK legally.



The sway bar contacts the rear wheel at full droop



Teraflex 2 inch lift kit needs offset wheels

TJ SOFT TOP

A long wait was ensured for a Jeep who had ordered a Bestop Supertop for a TJ back in April through us in the sand colour. Black soft tops make up over 85% of soft top sales and is the general colour in stock. Any odd colours are literally made per order in Boulder, Colorado and shipped over through the Bestop network and this takes time. The order was for a hard top only TJ so we needed to supply a Supertop as they come with their own version of the door frame and bows. They also fit a little neater than the OEM top and strip down easier. You can remove all the windows as per an OEM top but instead of the main rag being screwed to the header it simply lifts off al-la CJ style and the bows fold down real neat. You can adjust the tension too in these tops by selecting any of four settings (holes on the main bow that the rear bow locks to).



Bestop Supertop in a box



The hard top comes off...



so the new soft top goes on, less curtains



New hard top fitted

83 CJ7

We finished the opposite job on the 83 CJ7, which ended up with fully rebuilt and gusseted full doors and an 84 hard top with a brand new lift gate. There was a lot of work in this job, we drilled and tapped the top stainless hinge each side to fit a set of early TJ mirrors. Standard CJ mirrors were junk and especially the stainless version, apart from having to refit the passenger CJ mirror arm to "work" on a RHD CJ they vibrate and snap off eventually at the end of the tube right at the mirror head mount. One thing that we couldn't buy was a CJ7 to TJ mirror bracket so we could interchange the full and half door and leave the mirrors and no one makes a drilled CJ hinge to suit so it's a DIY job. It makes a massive difference to run these style mirrors on a CJ and well worth the effort.



Waiting on a black handle and lock cover



TJ Wrangler mirrors fitted to CJ

JK BRAKES

A two-door JK diesel was in for a service and the owner complained about the lack of park brake – a common complaint for lots of Jeeps. Adjusting the park brake whether disc or drum on a Jeep is similar – you need to start with adjusting the park brake shoes. Some Jeeps only have that adjustment anyway, then you can tackle the main park brake cable adjustment. The JK is a little trickier than any other Jeep so far; you have to remove the rear wheels and then remove each caliper so you can access the adjustment hole in the rear of each backing plate by flipping the rubber bung out. And just like a typical drum brake you can adjust the non-levered end of the park brake shoes inside the rear disc. You want these just dragging as you spin the wheel around. With a TJ/XJ/CJ/SJ drum rear you can leave the wheel on and access through the hole. Spin the adjuster in the right direction to spread the shoes just enough to drag and allow maybe a full spin of the wheel only as you try to spin it as hard as possible while the wheel is in the air.

Back to the JK, once you get the park brake shoes set right that's all you can do. Same for a WG but with TJ/XJ/CJ/SJ drum rears you can then adjust the main cable at the equalizer. A half inch ratchet ring spanner is the best tool to use and with someone in the cab, you want to get three to four clicks out of the lever. Some jacked up rigs pull on the two cables to the back wheels and you need to make sure they're not tight or they will lock the brakes while she's airborne at full droop...and give you a bogus feel to the adjustment plus kill the cables early.

On that note, servicing new Jeeps that are under warranty can be done by any mechanical workshop and retain your factory warranty as long as they follow the factory handbook and fit genuine parts. That Ultratune advert saying car dealers will hate us.....is true, and smaller independent places like us tend to put experienced tradesmen on the job rather than a network of supervisors and apprentices and your warranty will remain valid while your Jeep gets looked after properly.



JK Wrangler park brake mechanism inside the rear rotor



Park brake adjustment made through backing plate

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