

Swing Axle to IRS

by Henry Z. DeKuyper

If you are an owner of a '69 or earlier Beetle, you are probably tired of the poor traction, poor cornering ability and the excessive tire wear due to the extreme camber that is caused by a swing axle type suspension. Well now there is a solution for the "negative camber" look. Suspensions Unlimited in Anaheim, California, is offering a high quality weld on bracket to convert your swing axle car to IRS.

An IRS suspension has many advantages over a swing axle type suspension. You can raise a Baja much higher without the wheels tucking under, or lower your Cal Bug without a lot of negative camber. IRS will also allow you to have better more predictable handling, adjust the suspension much easier and the wheels will stay flatter to the ground throughout the wheel travel for better traction.

One way to get an IRS rear suspension on your early car is to cut the pan where it meets the torsion tubes and

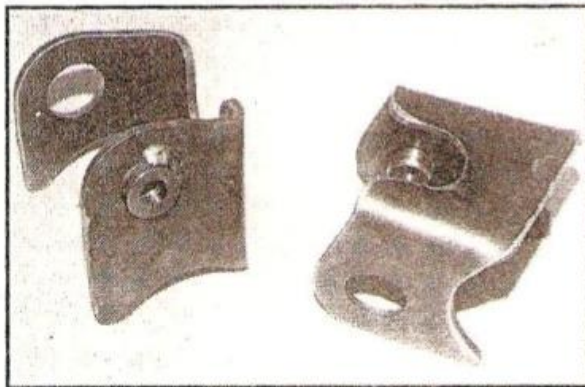
SUSPENSIONS UNLIMITED SHOWS US THE HOT SETUP

weld in an IRS rear end from a '69 or later Beetle. Not only would this be expensive but it would take many hours to make sure everything was square to the world before it was welded together.

Instead of doing all that work, the easiest way to convert your swing axle to IRS is to weld the pivots for the trailing arms to the rear frame fork and to the torsion tube. The most common method for converting your swing axle to IRS is to measure from the shock tower to the IRS pivot figure in some angles with a compass and weld. While this works if you have some fabricating experience, the novice might have some difficulty. That's where Larry at Suspensions Unlimited has come up with a solution. He has designed an instal-

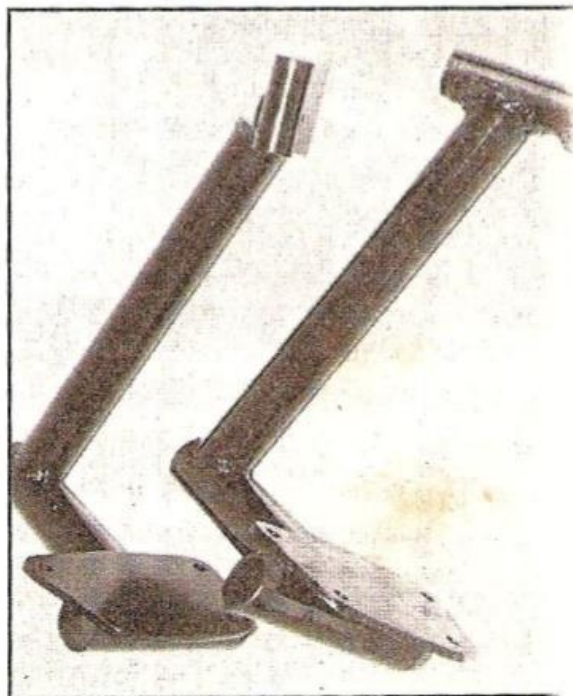
lation tool that fastens to the IRS bracket and to the shock tower where the end caps are bolted. This guarantees that the IRS pivots are installed in the correct position without the use of complicated compasses and measuring devices. Now follow along with the accompanying photos to see how easy it is to install the IRS brackets from Suspensions Unlimited.

Suspensions Unlimited not only makes the IRS Brackets and a wide variety of flame cut products but they can also take care of any custom fabrication needs from a complete race ready chassis to just about anything you can think of. For more information contact Suspensions Unlimited, 1345 Dynamics, Unit D, Dept. VWT, Anaheim, CA 92806, or call (714) 996-6260.

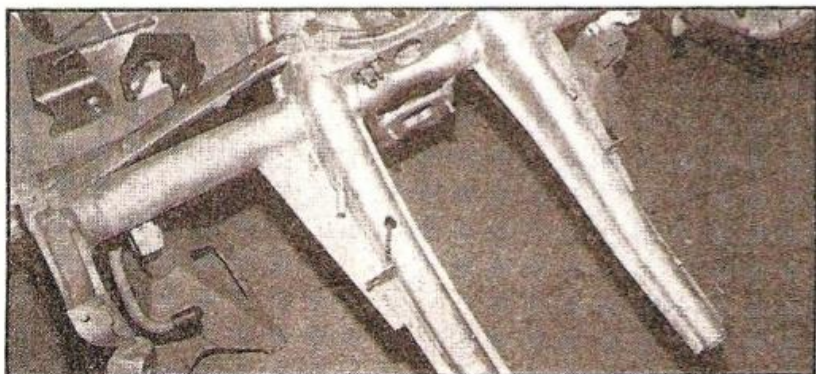


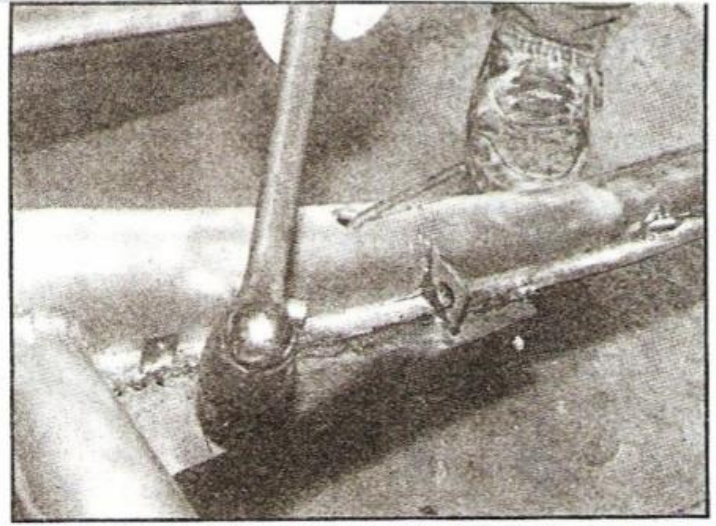
1 LEFT-By installing the IRS brackets from Suspensions Unlimited you will be able to raise your Baja or lower your Cal Bug without a lot of negative camber.

2 RIGHT-Suspensions Unlimited also offers an installation tool to guarantee that the IRS pivots are installed in the correct position.

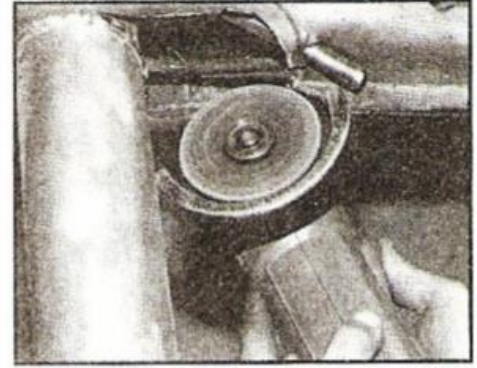
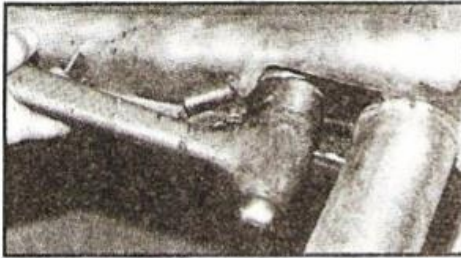
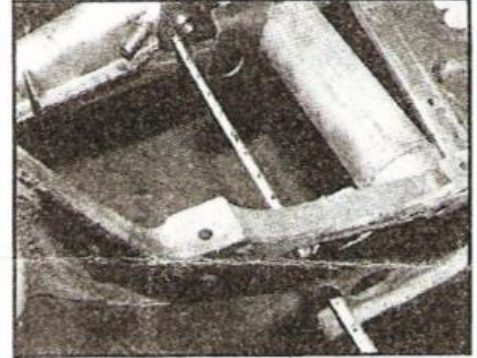
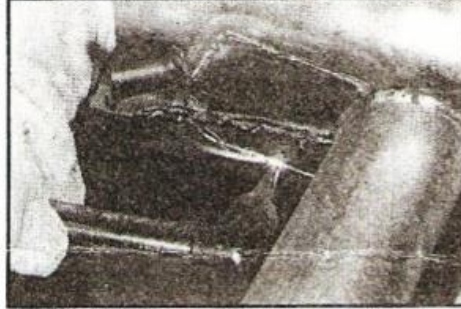
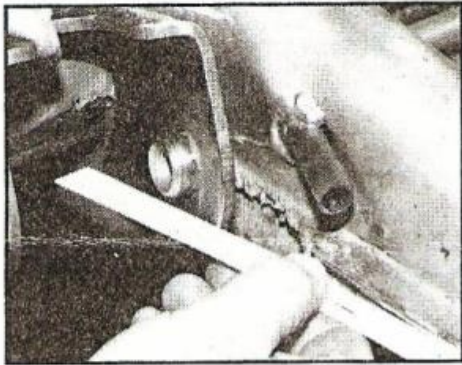


3 LEFT-This is what our '64 pan looked like before the IRS pivots were installed.





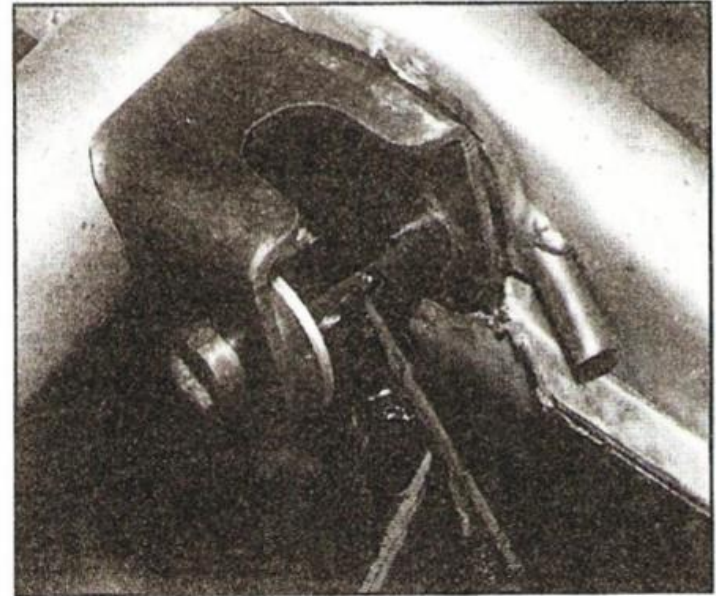
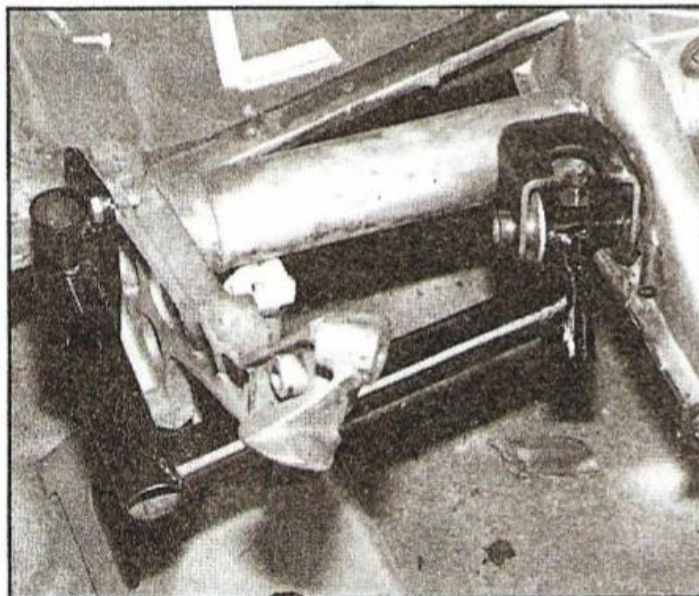
4 A&B-With a cutting torch cut the flange from the rear frame fork, be careful not to cut off the brake hose bracket, and knock it off with a hammer.



5 A&B-Use a straight edge to mark the centerline from the flange to the bolt hole in the pivot. Then trace around the pivot.

6 A&B-The next step is to cut out the area you just marked, in order for your IRS pivot to fit. CAUTION: WHEN CUTTING ON THE REAR FRAME FORK, DO NOT HAVE ANY PART OF YOUR BODY NEAR THE EMERGENCY BRAKE CABLE GUIDE TUBE, BECAUSE THE GREASE INSIDE COULD IGNITE AND FLAME OUT. Once the piece of the frame fork is cut out, the E-brake guide tube needs to be hit with a hammer to allow clearance for the pivot.

7 A&B-Now place the pivot in place to see if it fits. Most likely some additional clearancing will have to be done at this time.



8 A&B-Suspensions Unlimited offers an installation tool that allows correct installation of the pivots. Bolt the pivot to the tool and bolt the tool to the shock tower where the end cap attaches.



9 A&B LEFT & RIGHT-Now it is time to weld the pivot in place. If you are unable to do the welding yourself, have it welded by a competent professional. With the installation tool and the pivot in place, tack weld the pivot and remove the tool and finish off welding around and on the inside the pivot.



10-This is the finished product, as you can see Larry at Suspensions Unlimited did a beautiful job of welding the IRS pivots.



SOURCE BOX

Suspensions Unlimited
1345 Dynamics, Unit-D, Dept. VWT
Anaheim, CA 92806
(714) 996-6260

11 LEFT-If you are going to keep your swing axle shock tower, the tower has to be clearanced to allow the trailing arm room to move.

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