Rear Sway Bar End Links

Written by Shawn Mann

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You can build an entire 1967 Mustang from new reproduction parts. Mustang II owners are not so lucky and often have to adapt parts originally intended for other purposes in order to keep their cars on the road.

The rear sway bar end links are apparently unique to the II and are next to impossible to find NOS and hard to find in good shape used. Fortunately, there are a few options.

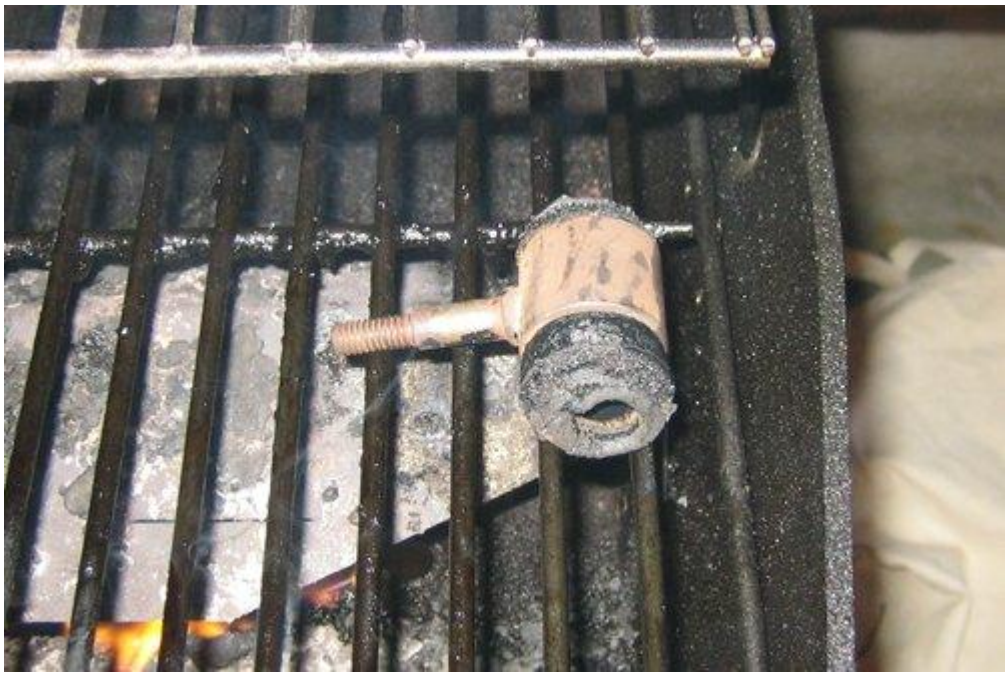
- Phil Schmidt at the Mustang II Specialty Shop has rebuilt rubber rear sway bar end links available.
- 50 dollarCOBRAII from the MustangII.net forums found a rubber shock bushing that fits the existing shell. Check it out.
- vince_78kc came up with this method that uses an aluminum bushing. Check it out.
- 77GhiaII found some bushings that have the correct inside diameter. Check it out

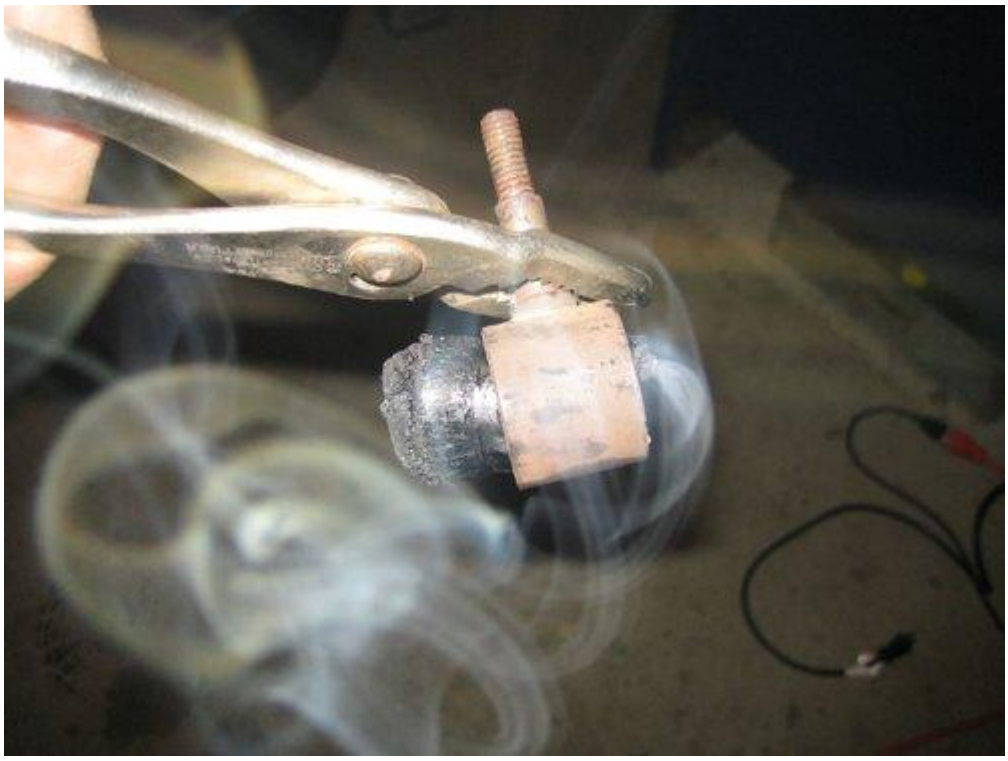
Below is the orginal method....

Energy Suspension urethane end link bushings (PN 9.8105G) will work as the bushings that the sway bar is sandwiched between. If you order the front end rebuild kit from Performance Suspension Technology, you will have enough left over for the rear of the car.

The eye bushing isn't available in urethane. By fate or coincidence, Mustang II leaf spring upper shackle bushings are available in urethane AND the outside diameter (OD) is the same as the inside diameter (ID) of the steel shell that makes up the eye end of the rear end link. However, the shackle bushings are too long, the hole is too small and the head of the bushing is too thick. We will be modifying Mustang II / Pinto urethane shackle bushings purchased from ESPO (PN BP-HB-387) for use as rear end link eye bushings. They are $3.00 each and you will need 2 to do each side of the car, 4 bushings total. I would order a few extra in case you screw up (I did). A few days later, order a few more in case you screw up again. (I did)

Step One: Remove the old rubber bushings. This is the point of no return. Fire up the BBQ. Put the ends link inside for 10 to 15 minutes to soften the rubber inside of the outer shell.





The rubber will expand and soften so that the inner sleeve and rubber can be removed from the outer shell. Use a pair of pliers to hold the bushing and another to pull the inner sleeve out. Remove the rubber. Don't burn yourself!

Step Two: Cut the bushing to the right length. Each replacement bushing needs to be 7/16" long underneath the head. I went to the hardware store and bought a 1/2" X 3" long bolt and 1/2" nut and (4) 7/16" washers (they fit tighter around the 1/2" bolt). Assemble the bolt, washers, bushing and nut as shown in the picture.

Tighten it finger tight, just enough to compress the bushing to keep it from spinning but without distorting it too much. Chuck the threaded end of the bolt into a 1/2" drill or a drill press. While running the drill or drill press at its highest speed, carefully use a hacksaw to cut / melt your way through the bushing. I cut my first bushing while chucked into a drill and it worked, but I got better results with the drill press (If you needed an excuse to buy a drill press, this is a good one). As you can see from the picture, I used a block of wood and the adjustable table to set the correct height of the hacksaw blade so that my finished bushing would be 7/16" under the head.

You could probably also just clamp the bushing and cut it off with the hacksaw without spinning the bushing, but I can't cut a straight line to save my life, this method helped overcome that handicap, worked really well AND I have a new drill press. Repeat 3 more times.

Step Three: Enlarge the hole in the bushing. The hole in the bushing needs to be just under 11/16" for the metal sleeve to fit snuggly. Unless you have some way of securely holding the bushing, a sharp drill bit, a high spindle speed and a way of slowly feeding the bit into the bushing, do NOT try to drill the bushing out. The bit will chatter at the entrance to the hole a bit, making a mess. When it finally grabs,

it will suck the bit right through the bushing. When the bit is removed, it leaves twisted urethane wreckage in its wake. Not a pretty picture.

The method that worked best for me with both the drill and the drill press was to get a 1/2" diameter rotary file (Vermont American PN 16677). It just fits inside of the existing bushing hole.

I put a glove on the hand holding the bushing and rotated the bushing against the bit pushing slightly on the bushing.

This worked well and slowly increased the diameter of the hole until I was satisfied with the size (should be about 21/32"). The inner sleeve should fit so snuggly that you have to force it in. Repeat 3 more times.

Step Four: Make the bushing head thinner. I used a 4-1/2" electric disc grinder to shave the thickness of the head down, but you could probably use a file or bench grinder to do the same thing.

The head of the shackle bushings purchased from Espo is shaped to fit the shackles so it has a slight dome on the head end. This dome needs to be removed so that when the bushings are installed in the metal shell, the width of the assembled end link should be about 1-5/16", not including the inner sleeve. This will allow the teeth on the inner sleeve to stick out a bit from the bushings and "bite" into the end link bracket when installed on the car. Repeat 3 more times.

Step Five: Clean Up and Test Fit. With a small utility knife, clean up all the edges of the bushings you modified. Make sure there aren't any shavings or other bits hanging on that will make things difficult to put together. This is also a good time to remove the rust from the

end links, prime, paint and clean up the threads with a tap and die.

Test fit the bushings into the outer shell and make sure they go in all the way.

Step Six: Assemble the bushings and inner sleeve to the outer shell. With my bushing order, Espo included some Energy Suspension Formula 5 Prelube (PN 9.11108) that I used to lube all of the parts prior to assembly.

Take the inner sleeve and force it into one of the bushings, I was able to do this by hand. Press the bushing with the inner sleeve in it into the outer shell (I used a small bench vice to do this) Get the other bushing started straight onto the inner sleeve and then use a bench vise or a bolt, washers and nut to press the other side into the outer shell and over the inner sleeve.

You may need to use some 11/16" washers with your vice to make sure that the inner sleeve is centered side to side with the outer shell. Repeat for the other end link.

Step Seven: Install and enjoy.

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