

Replacing the springs

Lowering springs for the FTO are available for Camskill, Swift, and Leda. The FTO suits a bigger drop at the front than the back although if you have a 'solid' style rear spoiler (as I do) lowering more at the front means you won't see diddley squat in the rear view mirror. (Which is why I went for swift's as they are 40mm drop all round). The job is technically easy, although is hard work as some of the nuts are fixed tight. It will take around 3-4 hours to swap all 4 springs. As with most things, once you've done it once it becomes very easy. Its much simpler changing from standard to lowering springs than vice versa because its not easy to re-compress a standard spring.

You will need

- A good socket set (a extended wrench is a necessity (£10) due to some of the bolts tightness)
- Assorted spanners
- Pair of spring compressors (£20)

The job will cost around £100 for a garage to do, which may influence your decision should you have to buy the tools.

Front set.

The front is harder than the back but should be done first in case you run out of time (its more acceptable to drive the car with just the fronts changed)

From under the bonnet loosen off the 3 strut nuts. Pull the black rubber plug from out of the centre and loosen the large centre nut.

Jack the car up and remove the wheel.

Remove the 2 horizontal large nuts holding the bottom of the strut to the top of the wheel. (Leave the bolts in for now)

Unclip the flexible brake pipe from the strut (easy to do by knocking out the clip)

Note the anti role bar and tie rod connection to the strut. Remove the small nut from the lower tie rod connection - you will need a spanner for the other side (this is the only fiddley bit)

From under the bonnet now remove the top 3 struts nuts completely and gently lower the strut down.

Knock out the 2 horizontal bolts that hold the lower strut and carefully lift the strut assembly from the car.

Note the way the off-centre spring 'cups' are positioned. Compress the spring with the spring compressors. Loosen and remove the top centre nut (CARE must be taken to ensure the spring is sufficiently compressed otherwise the top cup will come flying off)

Remove the old spring and replace with the new. A lowered spring will have to be compressed a little to allow the top assembly to be attached as before. Replace the top spring cup and fixing nut - Note the flat face on the spring cup hole and matching one on the damper bolt

Place the whole strut back under the wing and bolt back up. A wood lever or spanner will have to be used to lever back the anti role bar to allow the tie rod bolt to be re-fitted.

Back set.

This is much easier than the front and can be done without removing the whole strut.

From under the boot, pull back the carpet covering (from middle of the car is best) to reveal the top of the strut. Loosen off the 2 top strut nuts. With an adjustable spanner grip the centre bolt flats and with a second spanner loosen the centre nut.

Jack the car up and remove the wheel.

Remove the large bottom damper nut and bolt (from the chassis arm).

From under the wing compress the spring using the spring compressors.(easier than the front)

From the boot now remove the 2 top strut nuts and gently lower the assembly down.

Still from under the wing now remove the centre nut using 2 spanners.

Remove the top spring cup assembly (note the way it fits)

Remove the spring compressors and lift out the spring (you may have to push the damper in by hand)

Replace with new spring and reassemble the top of the strut (you probably won't need spring compressors for this). Also note that the spring is a different diameter at either end.

Re-bolt the strut to the top of the wing.

With a lever compress the damper up from the floor and hold up with a piece of wood (between the ground and the damper). Using a lever force the chassis arm down to line up the bottom damper hole with the chassis arm - so the bolt can be pushed home.

To Finish

Drive around for about a week to allow the new springs to settle before getting a garage to 4 wheel align (laser alignment) the car. (Cost about £50) If you don't do this you will get strange handling characteristics and your tyres will suffer from uneven wear.
