

SPIKER ENGINEERING

ULTIMATE Lift

1995-2004 Toyota Tacoma Hood Strut Installation Manual



NOTE: The latest version of the installation manual is on our website. Please download it and check its release date against the date of this manual (highlighted in yellow on top of page). Follow the instructions of the latest release date. Link to manual - <https://spikerengineering.com/installation>

Thank you for purchasing the Spiker Engineering *Ultimate Lift* hood strut kit. This kit uses premium OEM-quality components, and is designed for easy installation. Please follow this manual carefully to ensure a quality installation and many years of reliable service.

Although only the highest quality parts are used in this kit, the installation of these parts is beyond our control. Therefore, the only warranty provided is for the actual parts.

It is the customer's responsibility to understand all of the work involved in the installation process, and to ensure compatibility with their vehicle. No warranty is implied for the installation, and we will not be responsible for damage to your truck, engine, or other parts, labor, personal injury, or any other damage or injury resulting from use of these products.

Customer understands that all parts are aftermarket parts and have no OEM specifications.

If you have any questions or concerns at any point of the installation process, please contact us at service@spikerengineering.com before proceeding, and we'll be happy to help.

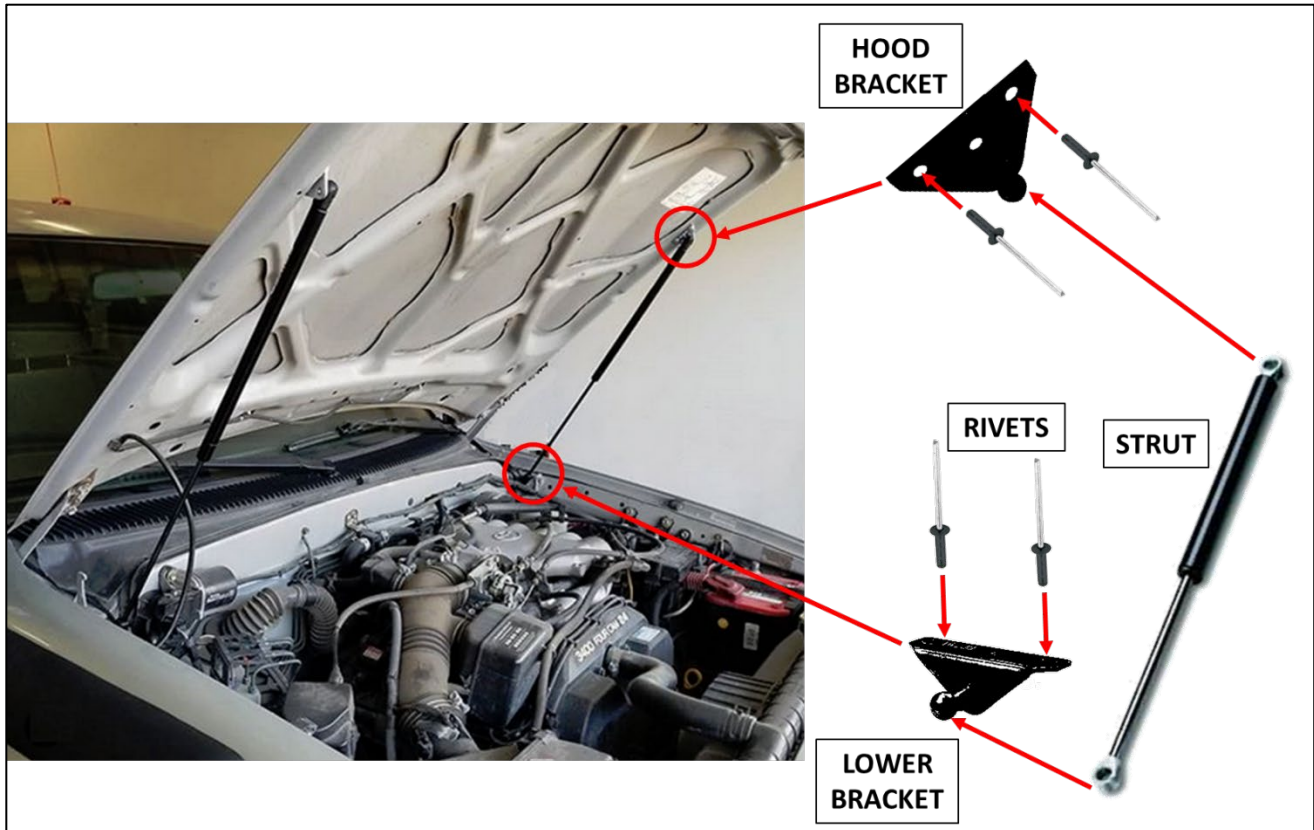
Quick Start Guide

Below is an overview of the steps involved in installation. The details of these steps are provided in the sections to follow. The typical installation should take less than 30 minutes.

Installation Overview:

- A. Preparation
- B. Install 90 deg brackets on inner fenders
- C. Install flat brackets on hood
- D. Confirm proper operation of struts and adequate clearances
- E. Enjoy a beverage of your choice to celebrate!

The figure below shows the components involved in the installation, please refer to it as you go through the steps in the following sections. Note that the exact shape of the components in your kit may vary from those shown in the figure.



A. Preparation

1. Check kit contents:

- (2) Gas Struts
- (2) Flat Brackets (Hood)
- (2) 90 deg Brackets (Lower)
- (1) Drill bit stopper
- (10) 3/16" Rivets (one spare rivet included in kit)
- (1) Window Sticker

2. Required tools:

- Tape measure
- Temporary prop (2"x4", or painter's pole)
- Painter's tape
- Permanent marker
- Center punch
- Power drill
- #9 indexed or 3/16" drill bit
- Rivet gun (3/16" nose piece)
- Touchup primer and paint
- Standard mechanics tool set

3. It is recommended that you watch the videos on our website at <https://spikerengineering.com/installation> for an overview of the installation process. However, this manual contains additional steps, tips and details, so please follow the manual carefully. In case of any conflict between the videos and this manual, follow the instructions in **this manual**.

4. Confirm clearance for the struts. When the hood is closed, the struts are stowed along the inside of the fenders. Stock Tacomas normally have the required clearance, but those with aftermarket add-ons along the fenders, and some '95-96 models, may require additional steps to provide the needed clearance (see Step 28). Contact us at service@spikerengineering.com if you have questions about potential interference, we can recommend solutions for some common issues.

5. Determine the desired hood open height. This kit was designed to accommodate **any** hood open position between the stock prop rod height and up to 8" higher (**Fig 1**). Once the open position is chosen, and the brackets are permanently installed, this will be the height to which the hood will always open, so make sure you'll be satisfied with the chosen hood height. Be sure to consider any add-on items, such as ditch lights, or low overhead objects, that may limit the open hood height.

NOTE: The hood height **MUST be between 0" and 8"** above stock prop rod height, as shown in **Fig 1** – otherwise damage to struts may result.

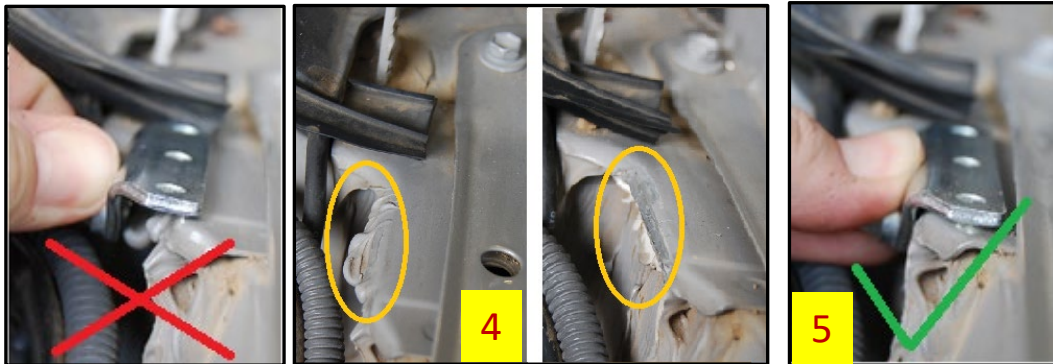
6. Prop the hood in the chosen open position using a 2"x4" cut to length, an extension pole, or other suitable means (**Fig 2**). It is recommended that a prop tool be used instead of relying on a helper to hold the hood, because it is important to have the hood stay in the same position throughout the installation process.



B. Lower Bracket Installation

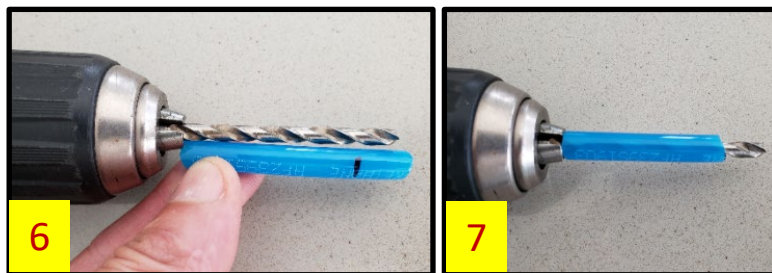
7. Place one 90 deg bracket on the driver side inner fender, approximately as shown in **Fig 3**.

NOTE: If there is excess factory seam sealer in the area (circled in orange in **Fig 4**), scrape it off with a knife or a razor so the bracket can rest tightly against the corner (**Fig 5**).



8. Apply painter's tape to the inner fender at the bracket location. Mark the three hole locations on the tape with a permanent marker, and center punch the marked locations. Remove the bracket.

9. Install a #9 indexed or 3/16" drill bit into a drill, and place the included drill bit stopper next to the drill bit (note - #9 drill bit is preferred and is available on our website). Mark the stopper with a permanent marker about 3/8" short of the drill bit tip (**Fig 6**), then cut the stopper with a utility knife at that location. Slip the drill bit stopper over the drill bit, confirm that no more than ~3/8" is protruding (**Fig 7**). This will limit the drill bit's reach during drilling.



10. Drill three holes through the inner fender at the marked locations using a slow speed and steady pressure on the bit (**Fig 8**). Apply WD-40 as needed to cool the bit. Remove the tape. Touch up the drilled holes with primer and paint to prevent future corrosion.

a. As an alternative, you can drill one hole, rivet the bracket in place using that hole, then use the remaining holes in the bracket as a guide to drill the last two holes.

b. If using a 3/16" drill bit, you may need to enlarge the hole slightly by rocking the drill back and forth while drilling.



11. Attach the bracket to the inner fender with three rivets, using a rivet gun equipped with a 3/16" nose piece (**Fig 9**).



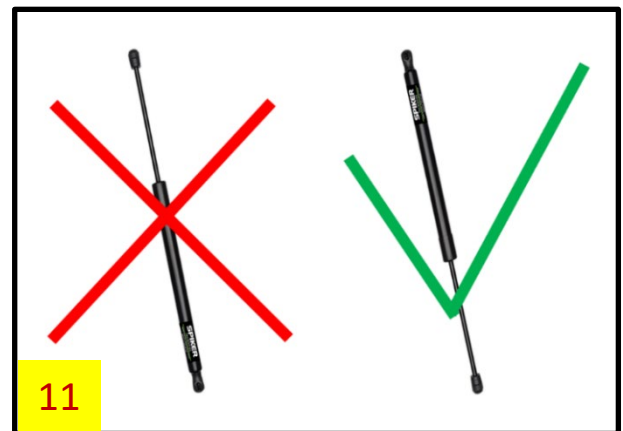
12. Take one gas strut, and check to make sure that both end fittings are threaded tightly onto the tube and rod ends. Push down on the strut against the floor until it is nearly fully compressed. Repeat this a couple of times. This relieves the initial high stiction that is commonly found in brand new struts.

13. Push the rod end fitting of the strut (the smaller diameter rod) onto the driver side bracket ball stud (**Fig 10**).



NOTE: Do **NOT** push the tube end fitting of the strut (with the SPIKER sticker) onto the fender ball bracket. See **Fig 11** for correct strut orientation.

14. Repeat Steps 7-13 for the passenger side.



C. Hood Bracket Installation

15. Take one flat bracket, and push its ball stud into the tube end fitting (the larger diameter tube) of the driver strut (**Fig 12**).



16. Raise the strut and bracket up until the bracket meets the inner side of the hood reinforcement as shown in **Fig 13**. The bracket should be just below the inside corner, flat against the reinforcement. If it is not, lower the bracket slightly. It should be approximately centered top to bottom on the hood reinforcement



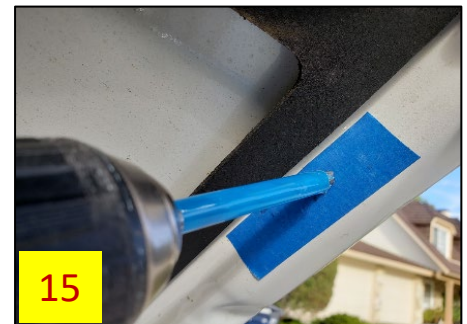
NOTE: The location of the bracket along the length of the hood may be different from these pictures, depending on the chosen hood height. To answer a question we sometimes get, no measurements are needed for locating the bracket – as long as the hood is at the desired position during bracket installation, simply install the bracket where it meets the hood when the strut is raised, as stated in Step 16.

17. Apply some painter's tape to the hood reinforcement behind the bracket. Use a permanent marker to mark the location of the outer bracket hole (red arrow in **Fig 14**) on the painter's tape. Lower the strut and bracket.



18. Double check that the hood is still open to the correct height and is level. Center punch the marked location.

19. Place a large piece of cardboard over the engine bay prior to drilling, to catch the metal chips. Drill through the hood reinforcement at the marked location, using a slow speed and steady pressure on the bit (**Fig 15**). Apply WD-40 as needed to cool the bit.



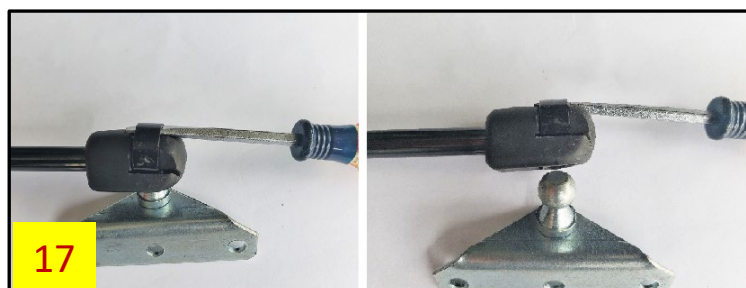
20. Remove the tape. Touch up the drilled hole with primer and paint to prevent future corrosion.

21. Raise the strut and bracket, line up the bracket hole with the drilled hole, and insert a 3/16" rivet to hold the bracket in place.



22. Use a rivet gun with a 3/16" nose piece to pop the rivet into place and secure the bracket to the hood (**Fig 16**).

23. Remove the strut from the flat bracket to gain access for drilling the second hole. To disconnect the strut from the bracket, use a flat blade screwdriver to lift the semi-circular clip at the back of the fitting, until the fitting can be removed from the bracket (**Fig 17**). Do not fully remove the clip.



24. Drill the second hole and install the second rivet to complete the bracket installation (**Fig 18**).



25. Push the strut tube end fitting back onto the bracket. Push the spring clip on the back of the fitting in place (**Fig 19**).



26. Repeat steps 15 through 25 for the passenger side. Do NOT assume that the location of the passenger side hood bracket will be identical to the driver side. Instead of measuring, use the same procedure for installing the bracket on the passenger side as you did for the driver side.

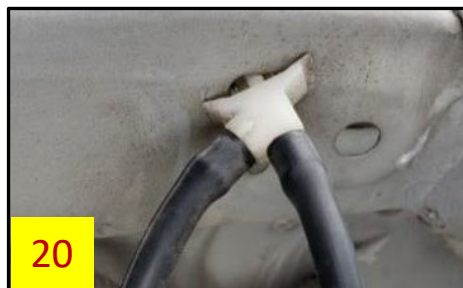
NOTE: Prior to drilling holes for the passenger side hood bracket, double check that the driver strut is still fully extended (i.e. has not sagged). Otherwise, the two struts will be out of sync and one will reach its end of travel before the other.

D. Wrapping Up

27. At this point you can remove the temporary prop and marvel at the improved access to your engine compartment. But don't slam your hood closed yet.

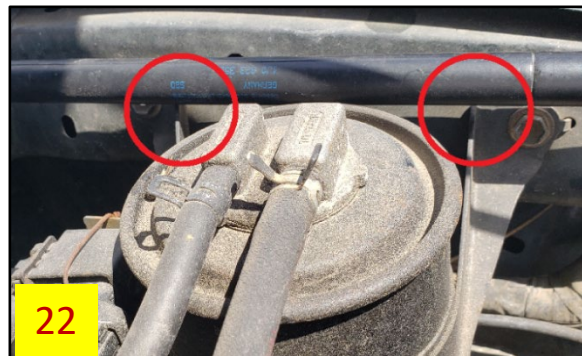
28. During the first closing, watch the struts carefully as you are closing the hood, especially in the last few inches, to ensure that clearance is maintained throughout travel.

a. The struts normally clear the passenger side windshield washer tube connector (see **Fig 20**). However, if there is interference, remove the tube connector and tie it to a secure location away from or behind the passenger side ball stud with a zip tie or other means (one convenient tie down location is shown in **Fig 21**).

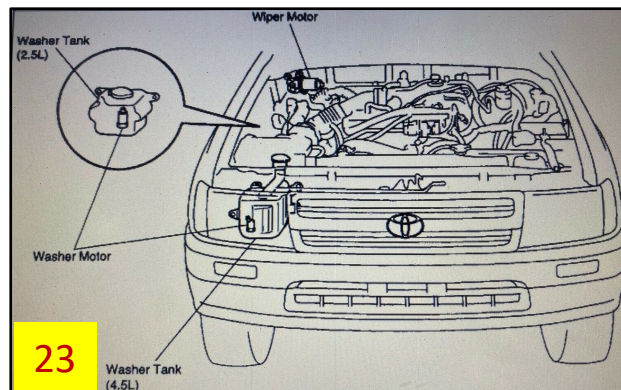


b. On 1995-2000 models, check clearance of the driver strut to the battery negative terminal. There is ample clearance to stock terminals, but aftermarket terminals can be substantially wider or taller.

c. On 1995-1996 models, check clearance to the charcoal canister (**Fig 22**). Struts may come close to the mounting bracket, in which case you may need to modify or relocate the bracket slightly.



d. On 1995-1996 4 cyl models, the 2.5L windshield washer tank may need to be relocated or replaced with the 4.5L model (**Fig 23**).



29. Once you've confirmed proper operation, have a beverage of your choice to celebrate your accomplishment!

E. Additional Notes

After installation, open and close the hood a few times to break in the struts for consistent operation.

During normal operation, you will need to open the hood by hand about 10-15" until the struts take over and fully open the hood.

In some situations, such as when the truck is raised on a jack inside a garage, the high lift configuration may be too tall to clear objects overhead. In those cases, you can use the original hood prop rod to limit the hood opening to the stock opening height.

Once you've installed this kit, we'd love to see a picture of your truck with the hood open, showing off the newly installed hood struts and the open hood. Please email us photos of your truck to service@spikerengineering.com, and let us know if it's OK to post them on the website or social media.

Finally, please post a product review at our webpage - https://spikerengineering.com/product/01-04_tacoma#reviews

Thank you again for purchasing this kit, we hope you enjoy it for many years to come!