

RAISING THE BAR

PROGRESS ANTI-SWAY BARS OFFER IMPROVED ROAD GRIP FOR AGGRESSIVE TRACK ACTION



Bigger is often better when it comes to anti-sway bar performance. Here you can see the difference between the stock bar (top) and the larger Progressive bar (bottom). Due to the thicker design of the Progress sway bar, some lowered Mustangs might have slight clearance issues with the steering wheel at full-lock depending on ride height, wheel/tire width, et cetera. Check with GTR for details.

AT ONE POINT OR ANOTHER EVERY MUSTANG OWNER THAT HAS HIGH-OCTANE FUEL PUMPING THROUGH THEIR VEINS HAS GONE INTO A CORNER FASTER THAN WHAT WOULD BE CONSIDERED PRUDENT. AND WHETHER THEY ADMIT IT OR NOT, THEY HAVE FOUND THEMSELVES DESPERATELY CRANKING ON THE STEERING WHEEL ONLY TO REALIZE THAT THEIR PONY WOULD NOT RESPOND. INSTEAD, THE ONLY THING THEIR MUSTANG IS DOING IS SWAYING AND LEANING, AND AS A RESULT, SLIDING INTO THE TURN. IF YOU ARE LUCKY, THE TIRES WILL EVENTUALLY GRAB AND YOUR PONY WILL RESPOND TO THE STEERING COMMANDS. IF YOU AREN'T SO FORTUNATE, YOU MIGHT BE DESTINED FOR SOME OFF-ROAD ACTIVITY.

This describes what happens when a Mustang under-steers or over-steers to the point that the tires break traction. This nasty condition, induced by excessive body roll or sway, can be remedied somewhat with the addition of properly sized and matched performance anti-sway bars, also known as anti-roll bars. This is an effective, simple and relatively affordable way of making significant improvements to your pony's high-speed handling characteristics.

All Mustangs come from the factory with front and rear anti-sway bars (with the exception of some V-6-equipped cars which only have a front sway bar) to help prevent excessive body roll under "normal" driving conditions. But let's be honest—if you drove your Mustang under "normal" driving conditions all the time you probably wouldn't be reading this magazine. Most Mustang enthusiasts who value good handling and stability usually install the obligatory lowering sport springs, shocks and struts, and subframe connectors, and for most people that suits their needs. Others crave more and decide to take handling to the next level. If you fall into this latter category you will want to consider upgrading the factory stock sway bars for larger diameter sway bars. This will produce a well balanced and more stable handler that has noticeably less body roll during hard cornering. This



FRONT SWAY BAR INSTALLATION

1 Secure the car on sturdy jackstands and remove both wheels for easy access. Remove the nut on top of the sway bar end link that connects the factory sway bar to the factory lower control arm. Slide the sway bar end link bushing off of the stud and repeat for the other side.

2 Locate and remove the two nuts that secure the sway bar brackets to the frame. Repeat for the other side. Once both sway bar brackets are unbolted, you will be able to remove the front sway bar completely from the vehicle.

3 Use a screwdriver to pry apart the top plate of the sway bar bracket. Now slide the stock sway bar bracket off of the sway bar. You will need to re-use this on the Progress sway bar.

flatter cornering ability leads to better tire grip, which ensures you stay on your intended path. Needless to say, this is always a good thing.

One such Mustang enthusiast with a heavy right foot and a propensity to seek and destroy corners is Andrew Michaelson. He is the owner of a 1999 Mustang GT Convertible that is already well equipped to fight the twisties. He has beefed up his pony with lowering springs, Tokico shocks and struts, Maximum Motorsports lower control arms, strut tower brace and subframe connectors. Even though Andrew's car is already a more capable handler than many other Mustangs on the road, he still felt that the car had excessive body roll under aggressive driving situations.

Andrew consulted with GTR High Performance in Rancho Cucamonga, California, and they suggested he upgrade to the Progress Technology front and rear sway bars to remedy this problem. GTR High Performance is one of the top Mustang performance shops in Southern California, and has the know-how to transform a Mustang into a corner-burner.

We asked the experts at GTR to give us an in-depth look at how to swap out the Mustang's puny stock sway bars in favor of the more macho Progress sway bars. The installation procedure is relatively easy and can be accomplished in several hours with basic hand tools. However, it does simplify matters if you have an assistant, as you will need another set of hands during much of the job. If free food and cold beverages is not enough to convince a buddy to help you out with this project, GTR offers professional on-site installations for a



REAR SWAY BAR INSTALLATION

4 Using the supplied grease, lubricate the new polyurethane sway bar bushings and slide them onto the Progress sway bar. Re-assemble the stock sway bar bracket around the Progress sway bar.

5 Lift the Progress sway bar into position and align with the studs on the chassis that support the sway bar mounting brackets. Simultaneously align the sway bar end links through the sway bar ends. This is a bit tricky, and you will need an assistant for this step. Once aligned, install the original nuts on the sway bar brackets and re-assemble the sway bar end links. Tighten down and secure. Make certain that there is sufficient clearance with the sway bar.

6 Secure the car on jackstands and remove the wheels to gain access to the rear sway bar. Remove the two bolts that secure the factory sway bar ends to the rear lower control arms. Once both bolts are removed from both sides, the sway bar will fall out from the car, so have an assistant help support the sway bar.

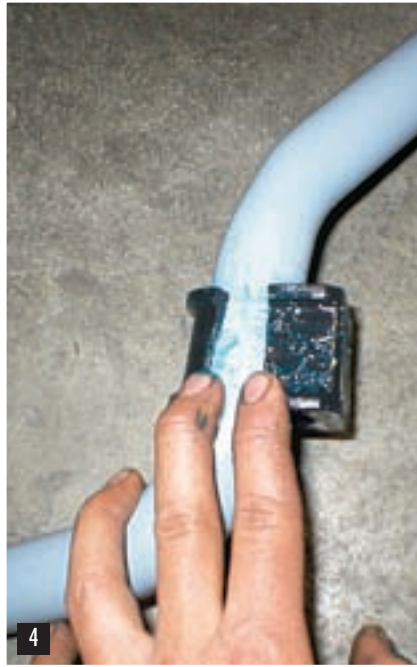
7 Align the Progress rear sway bar onto the holes in lower control arms and attach using the supplied hardware. Make sure to reconnect the factory emergency brake bracket onto the rearward most hole in the lower control arm. Tighten the bolts to secure the rear sway bar.

8 Note that due to the slightly different design of the Progress rear sway bar when compared to the stock bar, ground clearance is slightly reduced. However, even on a lowered Mustang with stock or aftermarket control arms, you should not have any issues.

modest fee, and they keep the Progress sway bars in stock.

All things considered, the Progress sway bars are an ideal addition to any Mustang that already has a couple of basic suspension and chassis upgrades. Otherwise, if your car is bone-stock, this might be an excellent place for you to start, as it will give you a solid foundation to build upon.

The Progress sway bars proved to be user-friendly and required no modifications to install...simply unbolt and bolt in. This is great considering that other aftermarket companies offer complicated and exotic front and rear sway bars that require drilling and other modifications in order to be installed. This was certainly not the case with the Progress sway bars. The Progress sway bars are sold individually for \$139.99 each through GTR High Performance, and come complete with the necessary polyurethane bushings and hardware required for a clean and



hassle-free installation. Although you could purchase the Progress sway bars individually, it is highly recommended that you opt for the matched pair, as they are designed to give best results when used as a pair.

For comparison purposes, we measured the Progress front sway bar at 35mm diameter compared to the stock sway bar thickness of 30mm. The Progress rear sway bar measured 29mm compared to 24mm for the stock rear sway bar. This may not sound like much, but it is enough to significantly reduce body roll for more cornering power. Lastly, due to the Progress sway bar's tubular construction, they actually weigh less than the stock sway bars, which is a definite plus for any kind of performance driving.

We got a chance to spend some time in Andrew Michaelson's convertible GT to evaluate the Progress sway bars, and were quite pleased with the results. First and foremost, the vehicle cornered much flatter and was more stable when negotiating a turn. Traction was also improved as the car wasn't as tail-happy, and the tendency for the Mustang's back end to whip out was better under

control. Steering was noticeably sharper and responded quicker. Gone was the momentary delay when a steering input was fed through the steering wheel. Just point and go...right now.

Overall, the Mustang felt more nimble and inspires the driver to go harder into a corner because the car now has the ability to do so. The neutral handling offered by the Progress sway bars instills more confidence in the driver simply because the car is easier to drive at a quick pace. The Mustang was now more forgiving due to this newfound stability.

One bit of information that you will be glad to hear is that under "normal" driving conditions, ride quality and comfort didn't seem to be affected, which is something you normally associate with performance suspension parts. This could be due to the Progress sway bar's lower weight compared to the stock sway bars. Any reduction in unsprung weight results in an *improvement* in ride quality. This was certainly a bonus.

Could this be the ideal performance suspension handling upgrade for your car? Maybe, as we saw many benefits and no adverse side affects. ■

SOURCE

INSTALLER: GTR HIGH PERFORMANCE
8429 White Oak Ave. #107
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FEATURED PRODUCT:

Progress Technology front and rear sway bars

SUPPLIER: Progress Group
www.progressauto.com

COST: \$139.99 each (GTR retail price)

VEHICLE: 1999 Mustang GT Convertible
(owned by Andrew Michaelson)



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