



PROJECT DC2 INTEGRA

SUSPENSION TUNING

Story and Photos **Peter Tarach**

Sporting a new set of 17x8.5-inch +32 SSR Type-F wheels and Dunlop Direzza Sport Z1 Star Spec tires, the DC2 Integra had the right footwork. But with its stock ride height and plush suspension, it looked more like a 4x4 than a sports car. Some suspension tuning would fix that.

Choosing a proper coilover or spring/shock combo that works for you has become quite a challenge these days. With the market being flooded with budget systems, it's often

hard to decipher the bad from the mediocre to the good. Nine times out of 10, price is the deciding factor, which is understandable; we all have budgets to work within. Going with cheap coilovers or even a lowering spring is fine if you plan to keep your car on the street and don't care about ride quality. However, if you want to go fast around a track or go head-to-head with your friends on an auto-x, then you need to go with proven components that will deliver the performance you desire.



A quick comparo of the stock components to the aftermarket parts.



The stock top hats have to be installed onto the KW V3 coilovers. They will provide more comfort for the street over metal-type top hats.



The KWs provide both compression and rebound adjustment, making them the ultimate tunable coilover.



The Skunk2 parts provide an unmistakable look and stiffen the entire rear end up—perfect for those track days.

Heading online to check reviews is a solid idea, but don't always believe everything you read. Remember that anyone can call themselves an expert online, and it's best to reference several forums. Personally, I like to go to the track and see what the fast cars are running and talk to the owners. That way, I'm getting first-hand information from legit drivers/racers, not some 18-year-old know-it-all who thinks a parking lot is a racetrack.

Having been to many attacks and witnessed our very own G35 project car shave 2 full seconds off its track time by switching to KW coilovers, I knew that KW Suspensions would be my coilover of choice. Sure, there's a bit of a premium to pay to get into a KW Variant 3 setup, but it's well worth the extra bucks. The 14-way adjustable, low-speed compression and infinitely adjustable rebound means you (if you know what you're doing) or an expert can fine-tune the suspension for a variety of track conditions while the high-speed setup has been tuned by the factory engineers for comfortable street driving. Most budget coilovers offer combined compression and rebound adjustment, so it's very easy to do—but it's rarely the optimal or fastest combination. To be ahead of the competition, individual compression and rebound are key. The KW V3 coilovers offer many great features, but my personal favorite is that the coilovers are constructed entirely out of stainless



Sometimes you need a little persuasion to help make something fit. A metal bar worked wonders for rolling and pulling the fenders out to fit the wheels and tires.



The fitment looks great, but driving around being this low is questionable.

steel. This makes them not only durable but resistant to the effects of corrosion and rust. You will never have to battle with rusted collars again.

Installation is straightforward and can be done in two to four hours. However, you'll have to use the top hats off the factory suspension setup, so you'll need a spring compressor. KW does this to ensure a smooth and factory-like ride on the street. With a solid metal top hat comes the clanking and harshness associated with metal-on-metal contact, which no one wants for the street. The factory top hats give up a little at the track but make up a ton on the road. The trade-off is well worth it.

The Integra's double-wishbone suspension doesn't allow for much camber adjustment from the factory, and even if it did, it wouldn't suffice with the wheels we're running. We needed an aftermarket solution. Skunk2 offers a plethora of suspension pieces that provide some serious adjustment of camber and toe—exactly what I needed to ensure the wheels and tires wouldn't contact the fenders.

Using S2's Pro Series front camber arms, we were able to bring the wheels in just enough to have them clear the fenders. It required 2.75 degrees of negative camber, but with the toe set to zero we shouldn't eat the inner tires at all. Inner tire wear is often a result of improper toe settings. As an added bonus, the negative camber will be awesome for the track. The rear of the DC2 got the



With a more practical ride height, the DC2 may not impress die-hard stance critics but it doesn't act as a snow plow in the winter.

PAINT JOB?

WHO NEEDS A PAINT JOB!

As many of the photos tell, Project DC2 Integra has less-than-stellar paint and while I contemplate a paint job, the folks at Meguiar's were able to provide me with some worthwhile products to bring back what little shine is left in the paint. This car is an extreme example of faded and worn paint and nothing short of a full respray will make it look new. However, on cars with paint that is just starting to fade or getting a little cloudy, the three-step process of Meguiar's Deep Crystal System will bring them back to like-new status.



This hood is as faded as it comes. It's lost almost all of its clearcoat.



The paint cleaner removes oxidation, swirls and light scratches while the second step, Deep Crystal Polish, creates that high-gloss finish.



As you can see, the system helped tremendously bringing back what little life the paint has left.

same treatment with a set of S2 rear camber arms, lower control arms and a lower arm bar. The advantage of the lower control arms over stock is that they provide stiffer polyurethane bushings, resulting in less deflection in the suspension geometry and more precise response on the track. Combine that with the lower arm bar and the rear end is well equipped for the rigors of racing.

I quickly found out that even with the rear camber arms installed and maxed out, the tires still managed to rub the fenders. This is where having a crappy paint job comes in handy. Since I didn't have a proper fender roller handy, a big bar did the trick. With some minor massaging and minimal paint cracks, I was able to flare the fenders out enough to accommodate the wheels.

After some more aligning and tweaking, the aggressive stance and wheel fitment that I had been after was achieved. My only problem was, at the time of performing these modifications, winter was well on its way and I'd be a fool to drive the car around this low. Much like most enthusiasts who slam their car too low, I quickly came to my senses and adjusted the ride height back to something more livable and practical. I'm currently not satisfied with how the car sits, but it will have to do. As I write this, warm weather is on its way and I'll soon address the stance and dial it in to where I'm happy with the look, all the while considering that you can't go fast around a track with suspension that's bottoming out.

I will also follow up with a full report at how the car does on the track with the KW V3 coilovers. The sappy B-series has to go before I tear up any asphalt, though. A full K-swap will be coming soon as well as a how-to on installing a JDM front end. //

{ SOURCEBOX }

Dunlop

Direzza Sport Z1 Star Spec Tire
www.dunloptires.com

KW Suspensions

Variant 3 Coilovers
www.kw-suspension.com
800-445-3767

Meguiar's

Deep Crystal System
www.Meguiars.com
800-347-5700

Skunk2

Suspension Pieces
www.Skunk2.com
951-808-9888

SSR Wheels

17x8.5" Type-F Rims
www.ssr-wheels.com
310-783-0200

Teknotik

JDM Type-R 5-bolt Conversion
www.teknotik.com
416-907-3851