

## DIY SHOCK ABSORBERS

# Smoothing out the bumps

Fit shock absorbers to the caravan and give yourself an easier ride, says **Sam George**  
**Time** Two hours **Difficulty** 2/10

**You will need** Caravan jack, axle stand, wheel brace, torque wrench, 12M or adjustable spanner, screwdriver, pliers, mole grips, tape measure. And magnifying glass – to read the instruction diagrams on the packaging!

**Cost** £62.53 including VAT.

**Note** We fitted the shock absorbers

to an Abbey caravan with an AL-KO chassis. The shock absorbers are suitable for fitting to some other chassis, but check with AL-KO to confirm.

This job involves the removal of each of the caravan wheels so ensure you use an axle stand! **Our thanks** to AL-KO Kober Ltd



**3** Jack up the caravan until the wheel is clear of the ground. Have the axle stand ready and place it in position before undoing the studs/nuts and removing the wheel.



**1** AL-KO shock absorbers are colour-coded to suit various caravans' load capacities. The kit has everything you'll need except a magnifying glass to read the diagrams on the carton!



**4** Don't forget to lower the steadies to help maintain the caravan's stability.



**5** Use a screwdriver to remove the plastic rectangular blanking plug from the underside of the swing arm.



**2** Work on one wheel at a time. Before commencing work, make sure the hand-brake is fully applied and place chocks in front of – and behind – the opposite wheel. Only then should you 'crack' each stud/nut on the wheel to be removed.



**6** The mounting brackets are right- or left-handed and have arrows which should point forward when the brackets are fitted. ➔



**7** Insert the brackets into the slot in the underside of the swing arm. If necessary, use a pair of pliers to press the brackets together during this part of the operation.



**8** Insert the bottom shock absorber bolt through the mounting bracket. I found a pair of mole grips handy for holding the two halves of the bracket together at this point. Fit the nut but leave it loose for the time being.



**9** Refer to the diagrams on the carton and, if necessary, use a tape measure to confirm which one of the holes in the chassis is to be used. Insert the top bolt through the hole and fit the nut, again leaving it loose.



**10** It is important that the nut is tightened to the correct torque of 86Nm (63.5lb/ft). The only certain way of ensuring this is to use a torque wrench. They aren't cheap, but you'll find that, more and more nowadays, manufacturers are quoting torque settings for their products, so a torque wrench will prove a useful accessory in your tool kit.



**11** Having set the wrench to the correct torque, tighten the top nut. Align the shock absorber and the mounting bracket and then tighten the bottom nut to 86Nm (63.5 lb/ft). The nuts, incidentally, are self-locking to prevent them coming loose.



**12** Refit the road wheel and studs. Raise the caravan and remove the axle stand. Raise the steadies and lower the caravan on to the ground. Lower the steadies and, having set the torque wrench to 880Nm (65 lb/ft), tighten the wheel studs/nuts in sequence – north, south, east, west. Repeat steps 1-12 for the opposite wheel. Finally, remember to recheck the wheel stud torque after the first 50km (30 miles). 🚗