



Design Your Jeep Build

Part Five Lifts

Time to decide how tall you want to go!

LadyJeepers.com

Lifts

Welcome to Lifts in your Design Your Jeep Build section number five.

I want you to remember that this is your build. This is so important to remember that it is your build and it is unique to you. There is no one way or one answer on what you need to get. This needs to be your personal preference as well. Your taste in something that you like the look of and love.

I am going to be talking about lifts. There are all sorts of different sizes and types of lifts. I am going to go ahead and go over a couple of different generations of jeeps and some specs when it comes to lifts.

Like I have talked about previously, you need to know what size tire build you are going to do. Starting with the tire size is going to be crucially important because that is going to be your platform. That really is what you are designing your entire build around is your tire size.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT TO DETERMINE YOUR
LIFT

WHAT TYPE OF FENDERS ARE YOU GOING TO
RUN?

WHAT SIZE TIRE YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE.

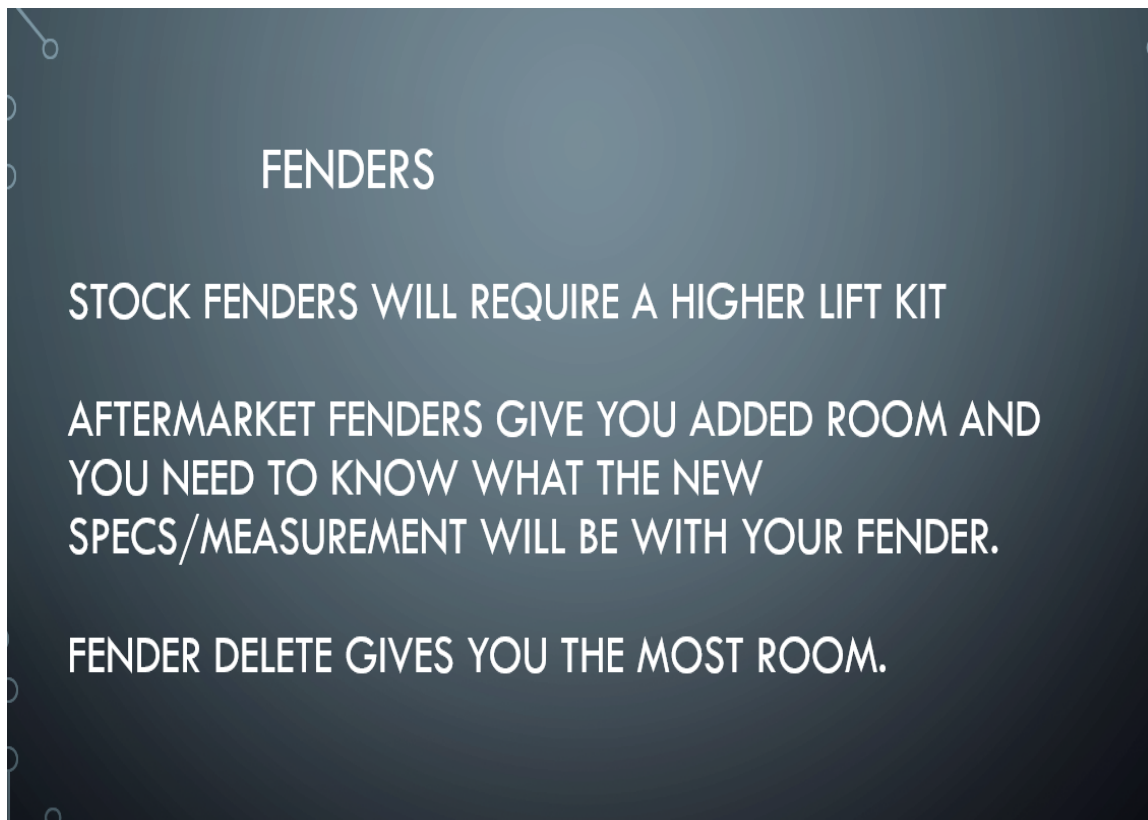
WHAT TYPE OF JEEP YOU HAVE.

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One thing to think about when determining your lift is fenders. As you are working through these classes, you are designing your build for your jeep as you go. In this Section you are thinking about what type of fenders you are going to run.

- Are you going to stay with stock fenders?
- Are you going to go with an after market fenders or a high profile fender?
- Are you going to be going with a fender delete?

I really went in depth on fenders and how fenders are directly related to our builds and the decisions that you are going to make in our section number three. If you missed that then go ahead and jump back over there. It goes in depth and talks about the different fenders and your different choices. So stock fenders versus after market and fender delete are going to determine the room that you are going to have for your tire before it interferes with your fender. This really is going to determine how much travel you are going to have or how much flex you are going to have in the suspension before the tire interferes. However, do not forget what type of Jeep you have also factors in.



Then of course the most important thing is what size tire you're going to have.

A lot of times the first thing that the tire is going to hit is the fender. However, that is not always true. I previously went into that a little bit when I started talking about offsets and backspacing on wheels to keep it out of the way of other parts of our vehicle.

What you want to think about is the fender that you are going to run is directly going to affect how much travel you are going to have. You don't want to limit the travel because then you will have a clearance issue. This is where you need to know what fender you are going to have first, what size tire you are going to run, and then that is going to help you to determine your lift. A stock fender is going to require a little bit taller lift kit. The after market fenders are going to give you added room that you need, but make sure that you are going to know the new specs and measurements that you are going to have with your fender. You want to make sure that you are going to have enough room for tire clearance and travel between your tire and your fender.

Then of course, out of all of the choices, fender delete is going to give you the most room and the least interference because you will not even have a fender to run into.

Let's jump into our quick guide.

Everyone has their own opinions. This is just kind of your conservative middle of the road, if you will. It is not super conservative, but it is also not pushing the envelope. You can put a bigger tire on, but then that means you might end up with clearance issues. You might have to change more parts, you might have to do more fender trimming or things like that. This is the middle where you are safe. This is your guide that you are going to go by for landing right in the middle of options and opinions on height and lifts.

This guide is your overview to help you. There are multiple ways you can design your build that will change the amount of lift you will need. The fender choice is one way to go about making more room in the wheel well to allow for a larger size tire without relying entirely on the lift height. (We already covered that in depth in section three if you want more information on that aspect.) Some people also opt to shave or cut the stock fenders versus buying after market to achieve the same result. That is up to you and your build, but is also a way to allow for less lift and larger tires.

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CJ Models

We are going to start with the CJ generation first.

On a stock height CJ, you can run a 28 or a 29 inch tire making no changes to the Jeep. If you wanted to cut your fender or do some trimming to the fender that is on there or go with an after market fender you can put on a 30 inch tire without a lift.

If you do a two inch lift you can run a 32/33 inch tire. A four-inch lift will allow you to run a 34/35, though you may need to do some fender trimming depending on what stock fenders and how much articulation you want to achieve. The CJ is one of the smaller sitting stock Jeeps and it is also one of the smaller wheelbase Jeeps so the taller you go with a lift the more you need to think about doing a stretch to allow for the balance and stability of the Jeep. A rule of thumb with these Jeeps is the taller you go the longer (add stretch to move the tires to balance out the up you created) you need to go as well. This is not an exact science and everyone has different opinions but when you think about a four inch lift height on this Jeep you should also be thinking about a four inch stretch to even this Jeep out. Especially if you have a CJ5 that is the shortest length in the CJ generation. This is our opinion for safety and driveability.

The CJ5 in the photo above has an estimated total lift of four and a half inches and 36" tires on it with a stretch of ten inches.

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YJ Models

Every Jeep as we start talking about the different generations and the different Jeeps themselves, are going to be running different size tires just based on how they come stock and manufactured from Jeep.

The YJ generation has a larger stance and length then the CJ generation but is still significantly shorter and more narrow track then the JK/JL generations.

If you are going to go with the stock height, you can run a 28 or 29 inch tire. If you do some fender trimming and cut your stock fenders to allow for more room and more travel OR you add an aftermarket fender you can run a 30 inch tire with no lift.

If you do a two-inch lift on your YJ, you can run a 30 inch tire. With that two inch lift if you do fender upgrades or trim your stock fender, you can run a 32 inch tire.

A four inch lift will allow you to run a 32 or if you do fender upgrades, you can run a 34 inch tire but remember this may involve cutting the fender area out in your YJ to allow for the room.

The six inch lift allows for a 34 or a 36 with upgraded fenders and some fender modifications to the wheel well to allow for this tire size.

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Just as we talked about with the lift height on a CJ generation Jeep, in the YJ generation with wheel base length you will need to keep in mind how to maintain your balance and center of gravity for safety and stability.

As you go up you need to be thinking about stretching the length and balance on the YJ as well. The taller or higher they get the more unstable and top heavy they become. A rule of thumb to keep in mind is four inches of lift and more you need to think about adding the length in stretch.

The YJ in the photo above is a major and long build. She is on a 7" lift, 42" tires, with one ton axles to add the width and a front and rear stretch that equals out to a total of eight inches of stretch as well. That keeps the center of gravity and balance for the stability in the Jeep. Jeep builds are math and science in essence. You factor in height, length and width to allow for the changes you make to be made across the board to keep the same balance and center of gravity. You need to think about that for anything four inches or higher on the YJ platform build.

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TJ or LJ Models

The next generation is the TJ/LJ generation. The LJ is the longer version of the TJ.

A stock height, TJ or LJ, can run a 28 a 29 or 30 inch tire completely stock with no lift. If you do fender trimming or modifications you run a 31 inch tire with no lift.

With your two inch lift you can run a 31 inch tire and if you do fender upgrades, you can run a 33 inch tire depending on the amount of fender trimming and wheel well clearance you want.

A four inch lift, you can run a 33 inch tire with stock fenders. If you do fender upgrades and trimming you can do a 35 inch tire.

In a six inch lift you can run a 35 inch tire and with fender upgrades you can run a 37 inch tire. But keep in mind that will require more trimming and clearance in the wheel well.

The TJ generation Jeeps do benefit from a stretch when you do a six inch or more lift on them. This is not as crucial in a 35 inch tire build but do keep in mind the idea of when you go up you need to add length to balance. The TJ generation allows for a little higher lift before you need to add that stability with a stretch in length.

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JK Models

The JK generation introduced the JKU. That is the unlimited 4 door version so it is longer with a longer wheel base.

In stock height you can run a 30 inch tire with stock fenders. If you do trimming to the stock fender or you add after market fenders, you can run a 33 inch tire.

A one inch or one and a half inch leveling kit with your stock fenders will allow you to run a 33.

A two or two and a half inch lift will allow you to run a 33 inch tire with stock fenders. Or, you can fit a 35 inch tire with high clearance fender upgrade and or trimming of the fenders.

A three inch to three and a half inch lift allows you to run a 35 inch tire, or a with fender upgrades and trimming of the wheel well and the correct offsets you can run a 37 inch tire.

A four inch or four and half inch lift allows you to run 37 inch tires with no fender alterations. With fender upgrades and wheel well trimming you can run a 39 inch tire.

A six inch lift allows you to run a 39 inch tire as well as your 40 inch tire plus sizes with after market fenders.

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You see the different tire sizes on different lifts, especially on the JK. This is going to be a little bit of a personal preference. You need to know is your jeep going to be more of your daily driver or is this going to be something that you are building to be able to do a lot of off-road driving. You need more clearance for suspension up and down travel with a Jeep you plan to drive off-road and trail ride more than your daily driver. You want to make sure you do the correct clearance adjustments to not have any rubbing or interference with your Tires.



JL Models

The JL Generation is the newest Jeep Generation. You can get a 2 Door JL in the Sport and Rubicon and the Sahara and Moab are only available in Unlimited, 4 door, as of 2019.

At stock height, the JL can run a 33 inch tire with no upgrades. You can fit a 35 inch tire on stock but you will have some clearance issues and rubs so you would need to modify the fenders and the offset.

If you are going to be driving off-road you would need to make more clearance allowances. With a two and a half inch lift you can run 35 inch tire with no upgrades to fenders or a 37 inch tire with fender and wheel well clearance allowance by upgrading and trimming.

A three and a half inch lift will allow you to run 37 inch tires with no fender upgrades or a 39 inch tire with clearance allowances made and fender upgrades.

A four and a half inch lifts allows you to run a 39 inch tire or up to a 41 inch tire with some clearance room allowances such as fender upgrades. The JL comes stock with a little bit more clearance and you can run a little bit bigger tire. This also means that the lifts that you need are going to be a little bit different.

Short Arm Lift Kit vs. Long Arm Lift Kit

There are different types of lift kits. I want to start by talking about the short arm lift kit. The short arm lift kit area is something you will get a lot of different opinions about. Especially the debate between the short arm versus the long arm lift kits.

In the CJ, YJ and TJ generation you will need to look into what height of lift for clearance you are going to need based on your tire size. There is a difference in length that then transfers over to the lift based on a short or long arm kit. The long arm kit in these Jeeps is going to make for a much better ride. It also will feel like you have more stability especially when you are driving on the road. A lift over two inches in these generations you will notice a difference in the handling and ride off-road driving as well as on road driving. We suggest in these generations going ahead and going with a long arm kit from the beginning.

For the JK Generation, a short arm lift kit is the most economical lift. For anything that is going to be under four and a half inches, a short arm lift kit is a great way to go. However, anything that is going to be over four and a half inches, you are going to feel the difference of the ride and stability on the road. Again, this is where it is crucial in knowing what size tire, then what size lift you are going to need. Then determine if you are going to go with the short arm or the long arm lift. A lot of people go with the short arm lift kit because it is the most economical, but it also is not a traditional short arm on the JK generation like it is in the older generations.

The JKU has a little bit longer arm to begin with stock. It is more like a mid arm so you are not getting a big difference between the technical short arm kit and a long arm kit on a JK or JKU. If you are looking at the economical side and depending on how big you are going to go and what size tire you are going to run, the short arm kit is a good way to go.

The long arm kit uses longer control arms. What they do is they move the mounts back farther to try to keep it at the same angles that you have with the stock parts. For that reason, welding will be involved and you will need new brackets. Then there also can be some exhaust that you are going to have to move around and reconfigure as well. The long arm kit is going to have a little more to it when you actually go in to install the lift itself. The ride quality and the higher lift is going to be better in the long arm lift kit. Even though these are the most expensive options, it is recommended for anything that is going to be four and a half inches and higher of a lift so that you are going to have a much better ride and more stability. That does equal a safer drive and a safer feeling driving. You will not really feel a difference off-road either in the long arm versus short arm in this generation until you go with a bigger lift.

In the JL generation there are more options coming out so this may change as new options come out. As of right now the lift kits for the JL come with long travel shocks. Remember the length and height stock is different in these Jeeps as well. But due to the component changes stock drive shafts will have to be upgraded as part of the Lift as well. Keep that in mind when getting a lift for JL and look into what options have become

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available to see if changes have been made to the specifications on these lifts. Look into the need to upgrade from the stock drive shaft to get the correct angles so that there is not interference with the parts from the lift.

The right lift for you

Remember that this is a guide and everyone will have their own opinions. My best advice, if you are kind of on the fence trying to decide what direction you are going to go, what lift you want to go with, is to talk to people who have different lifts. Go to some of the rides and some of the events and watch the different jeeps. See the performance for yourself. See what you like and decide after you do some research.

Maybe for economical reasons, you go with the least expensive lift kit, then you decide you want to do some more off road driving, some more trail riding and you decide you need something a little bit different. Take your time on every piece of this build. Remember, you only want to build it once, so sometimes you are better to save up, take a little bit longer and go ahead and purchase a little bit more expensive of a lift just because then you know, you won't ever have to go back and Redo it.

There are things that you get more for your money in quality and longevity, that means the product is going to hold up for you and you will not need to replace those parts. The level of use you are going to expect out of your Jeep also plays a part in what you expect from your parts. A Jeep that will be driven a lot needs high quality parts to hold up to the expectation of use. There are a lot of different options available with a lift kit, as well as different price points. I understand, trust me, that the economical side plays a big part in your build as well. Just remember saving up to buy the right lift once still saves you money in the long run if you have to go back and buy replacement parts for a lesser expensive lift. That is your choice and again, no judgement, just understand fully before you start your build.

Our top choices for Lift Options;

- * Metalcloak Lifts
- *Rock Crawler Concepts
- *AEV
- *Rusty's