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## Introduction

Undertaking a project car upgrade is often more opportunistic than deliberate. It is not unusual to take advantage of a bargain upgrade simply because a particular component is available right here, right now, and at the right price. Those of us that frequent swap meets or browse salvage yards know what we mean.

For instance, on a routine salvage yard run we came across a '76 Lincoln Mark IV. As the top of the line Continental, the Mark Series was the flagship Lincoln in the 70's. In addition to other upgrades over the base Continental, some Mark series cars featured four-wheel disc brakes. Of course, the big Lincoln incorporated the rear discs on the infamous 9-inch housing.

Coincidentally, FordMuscle staffers were in the midst of fitting a previously abandoned '73 Gran Torino "N" code with polyurethane. As we were finishing up the front end rebuild and just thinking about the rear end, we came across the salvaged Lincoln. We knew our '73 Gran Torino project car would stop just fine with its' factory 10.25" front discs and 10" rear drums. However, this was a fine chance to make an upgrade that was not typical and very intriguing.

## Application Background

If you are driving a Ford or Mercury intermediate from '72 to '79 and can find a salvaged Lincoln Mark series car in your local yard, then this conversion will work for you. Our local salvage yard had a Mark III and a a Mark IV both equipped with rear discs. Well-enforced abandoned vehicle laws and a general population not particularly fond of owning cars more than 5 years old, helps keep Northern California salvage yards full of interesting parts cars.

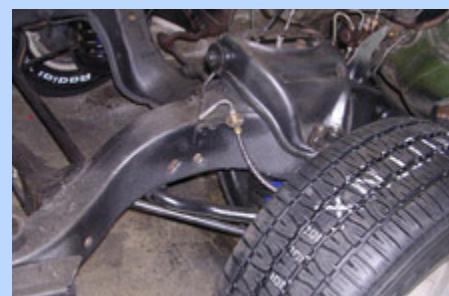
The Mark IV is considered a full size car while the Gran Torino we are building is an intermediate. They are both frame cars and coil sprung front and rear, but obviously the Lincoln is much longer and it does appear wider. We knew the additional length of the Lincoln would not affect the rear end configuration but the apparent width was a separate issue. Since we were hoping for a quick bargain upgrade, every added level of customization required to make this work was another reason not to use salvage yard parts and forgo the project.

### In This Article:

Follow along as we convert a '73 Gran Torino to four-wheel discs using stock components from a '76 Lincoln Mark IV.



FordMuscle staffers pulled an abandoned '73 Gran Torino from a chicken coupe in Sacramento. The car is relatively rare as it is a 429cid car (N code).



We quickly cleaned up the car and rebuilt the front end. Now, we were now ready for some rear-end upgrades. More about the front end rebuild in another article.

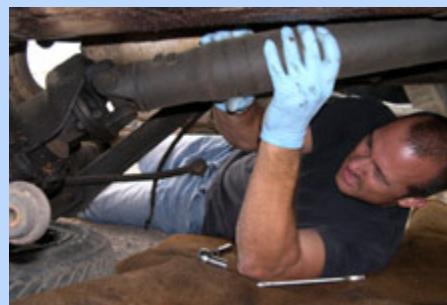


Well-enforced abandoned vehicle laws and a general population not particularly fond of owning cars more than 5 years old, helps keep Northern California salvage yards full of interesting parts cars like this '76 Lincoln Mark IV.

We took some rough measurements of the Lincoln axle housing and compared it to other mid-70's Ford intermediates in the yard. We found there was little to no difference in width, which eliminated visions of driving down the road with wheels outside the fender well. Spring perches, trailing arm, control arm, and shock attaching points were also suitable for the intermediate. The only issue that caused some concern was the Lincoln 5 on 5" wheel bolt pattern, which would not work for our current 5 on 4.5" steel wheels. We had intended to build the Gran Torino as a Restomod with factory 14x6" steel wheels. However, with polyurethane already installed in the front-end and now a potential rear disc brake setup, we figured we would be doing the car injustice with such small wheels. To keep true with our restomod goal and to accommodate the 5 on 5" bolt pattern we decided that period correct slot mags would be just fine. Especially, since this allowed us to use 255-60 R15 BF Goodrich TA's. The 5 on 5" bolt pattern is common on Chevrolet trucks and slot mags in a variety of widths are easy to find. With our original project goal project altered but justified, we dove into the upgrade. Read along as we document the swap highlighting the installation steps and some of the trouble spots we encountered.



To our surprise, we found that Lincoln used four-wheel disc brakes on some Mark series cars during the 70's. We contemplated fitting the rear disc setup on the Gran Torino.



We had concerns about how easily the full size Lincoln rear axle housing would bolt-up to the intermediate Gran Torino frame. We returned to the salvage yard the following weekend with tools and a pocket full of cockeyed optimism.

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