

CAR AND DRIVER-CARE TIPS

Despite Technology, Drivers Need to Be Smart About Their Vehicles

(NAPSA)—No matter how advanced our vehicles are, they can't take care of themselves. Even with today's newest technology, basic automobile maintenance can help ensure your vehicle a long, healthy life.

"Today's drivers have the latest automotive advances at their fingertips, but even the most advanced technologies don't reduce the need for basic maintenance on your vehicle," said Bill Maxwell, senior engineering advisor, Exxon-Mobil Research and Engineering Company. "Simple tasks such as routinely checking and changing the oil, checking tire pressure, and changing your air filter can keep your vehicle performing at its best, and help protect and prolong its life."

As part of its 30th anniversary, Mobil 1, the world's leading synthetic motor oil, is providing drivers with 30 helpful car maintenance and driving tips.

30 Tips for Car Owners

1. Read the manual—Take time to read your driver's manual and become familiar with the manufacturer's recommendations.

2. Check the battery—If a battery is older than four years, it may only work well in warm weather.

3. Don't get stranded—Always keep your cell phone charged and carry a set of jumper cables or portable power pack in case you are lost or stranded; however, you should not use your cell phone while driving.

4. Check your antifreeze—Check the antifreeze levels on a weekly basis. If the level drops regularly and there are no signs of an external leak, your engine has an internal leak that must be fixed to prevent major engine damage.

5. Save fuel—Avoid unnecessary abrupt braking and speed-ups as they can increase fuel economy by up to two miles per gallon.

6. Switch to synthetic oil—If you currently use conventional oil, switching to a synthetic oil like Mobil 1 will help your car operate more efficiently, help your engine to run cleaner and prevent harmful sludge build-up and deposits.

7. Let it idle—Allow your engine to idle for a few seconds before driving in cold weather to ensure proper engine oil flow and lubrication.



Basic automobile maintenance, such as routine oil changes and checking air filters, helps to ensure your vehicle a long, healthy life.

8. Check the air pressure—Check and fill tires to manufacturer recommended pressure; low tire pressure increases wear and fuel consumption. If a tire loses pressure regularly, it probably has a puncture or defective valve, which must be fixed.

9. Check the tread—When tires become too worn or unevenly worn, it can signal a wheel alignment problem or worn front-end parts.

10. Flush brake fluid—The fluid in your car's brakes attracts and absorbs moisture, which can lead to corrosion of your braking system. Anti-lock systems are particularly sensitive to corrosion. It is good practice to have your brake fluid flushed and changed every couple of years.

11. Tune it—Get a full engine tune up according to your owner's manual.

12. Check coolant color—Check the color of your coolant. Discoloration means the inhibitor in your coolant is depleted and your engine and radiator are being corroded.

13. Unblock hoses—An overheated engine may be the result of a blocked or pinched hose. Inspect them at every oil change.

14. See clearly—Check your windshield wipers for cracks and tears and get them replaced annually.

15. Clean air filters—Check your air filter system every other oil change to ensure there are no leaks or damage.

16. Inspect belts—Get it done

with your oil change, because damaged belts can cause poor engine performance or failure.

17. Realign suspension—A suspension that is not aligned properly can wear out new tires after only a few thousand miles.

18. Look at lights—Make sure your lights are clean and working, and keep some spare bulbs and fuses in the glove compartment.

19. Maintain power steering—Check the fluid once a month and, if it's low, look for leaks in hoses.

20. Fix the brakes—Don't postpone needed brake work, it's dangerous and can end up costing more to overhaul the entire brake system.

21. Fix a flat—Always carry a tire repair kit with you to temporarily seal a flat tire so you can get to the closest repair facility.

22. Test shock absorbers—Check for working shocks by bouncing the vehicle up and down and stepping away. If the vehicle doesn't stop bouncing your shocks could be worn or you may have a leak.

23. Lighten the load—Store only necessary items in the trunk to save on fuel.

24. Replace oil filter—Get it done every time you change your oil.

25. Wax it—Giving your vehicle a good wax job on a regular basis can protect your car's paint from pollution and rust.

26. Check spark plugs—Worn spark plugs waste fuel and increase exhaust emissions, so get them checked and replace them when needed.

27. Keep cool—Check your car's air conditioning system every spring.

28. Monitor the catalytic converter—If you hear a whistling sound or smell rotten eggs upon shutdown, your exhaust catalyst may be plugged. Driving with a plugged catalyst will hurt fuel economy, cause excessive oil consumption and harm the engine.

29. Check your transmission fluid—Check your transmission fluid monthly, following instructions in your owner's manual. Top-up as required.

30. Maintain the speed limit—Your life and the lives of others on the road are worth it.