

How to Change Your Engine Oil

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the No. 12 ALLTEL/Mobil 1
Dodge Intrepid



NASCAR driver, Ryan Newman (left), and crew member Joe Piette change the oil in a fan's car.

(NAPSA)—Most people don't have the luxury of a pit crew who can change four tires and refuel a race car in less than 16 seconds, but everyone needs to take automotive maintenance seriously or it will cost a pretty penny in the end. You don't have to be a NASCAR driver to know that you can keep your car running at peak performance by changing the engine oil as recommended by the owner's manual. Regular and routine car maintenance will extend the life of your car and, perhaps most importantly, save you money. Engine oil left too long can slow you down by leading to deposit and sludge build-up in your engine, reducing your car's performance and ultimately engine life. Changing your oil regularly is important, even off the racetrack.

Before you get started

Choose a flat spot in your driveway, garage or (in my case) race shop, to park your car. Oil may leak, so be prepared to guard against stains with a newspaper or large towel. You also will need to familiarize yourself with your vehicle, choose the right engine oil and ensure you have the proper tools and supplies at your disposal. Changing your oil will take approximately 30 minutes. The average cost for the replacement oil and new filter is \$15.00 to \$20.00 and will vary with the vehicle you drive and grade and brand of engine oil you select.

Get to know your car

Check under your car to be sure you know where the oil pan, drain plug and filter are located. I'm a huge antique car buff and have a variety of "toys," so getting to know each car is important. On most cars, the drain plug will have a hexagonal head and the oil filter will be on the side of the oil pan. Refer to your owner's manual's detailed charts if you get confused or don't know where something is located. It's always better to know ahead of time, than to be surprised in the middle of a project. Under the hood, locate the

engine oil fill cap to install the new oil and have the engine dipstick handy to measure new oil level.

Choose the right engine oil

Your owner's manual offers specifics on the best type and amount of oil for your vehicle and the right size of oil filter. Oils come in different weights and blends, and so many brands your head will spin. To avoid confusion always remember: synthetic oils provide the best overall performance for vehicles and driving conditions. Mobil 1 is a sponsor of Penske Racing's stable and, in my opinion, it's the best brand of oil.

Tools and Supplies

1. Owner's manual—This handy book should come with your vehicle.
2. New oil—Refer to your owner's manual for the recommended quantity and viscosity grade of new oil.
3. New oil filters—Refer to owner's manual which will list preferred size for vehicle.
4. Oil drain pan—Purchase one at an auto parts store.
5. Box or socket wrench—An auto parts store can help you make the right choice.
6. Oil filter wrench—Refer to your owner's manual and buy a wrench that matches the size of the oil filter you purchase.
7. Funnel—This is handy for installing new oil.
8. Dipstick—Normally under the hood of your car.

Change your oil

Before you begin, be safe and make sure the car is turned off and the engine is cool. The car should be in park or, if you have a standard, the car should be in first

gear with the emergency brake set. Follow these steps and you will be on your way to keeping your car running for years to come:

1. Locate the oil pan and drain plug.
2. Place drain pan under the drain plug. Remove the drain plug and allow used oil to flow into the drain pan.
3. When draining is complete, replace drain plug and make sure it is secure.
4. Remove the old filter and pour excess oil in the drain pan.
5. Dab some new engine oil on the gasket around the top of the filter before you install to ensure easy removal next change. Screw in the new filter by rotating clockwise—do not screw in too tightly.
6. Once the filter is secure, pop your hood and remove the oil cap. Insert the funnel and add the manufacturer's recommended amount of new oil.
7. After oil is added, use your dipstick to measure proper levels as specified in your owner's manual.
8. Check under your vehicle for leaks.
9. Start your engine, allow your car to idle briefly and check again for leaks.

10. Remember to carefully dispose of your oil. There are regulations to ensure that oil is disposed of properly and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency can impose fines for improper disposal. Save your oil bottles and place old oil in them for disposal. Check how to dispose of the filter and used engine oil at www.mobil1.com or www.earth911.com.

I know all of the above may sound like a lot, but it's really pretty easy and well worth it. Changing your oil regularly will extend the life of your engine and improve your car's fuel economy. I have won races this season because of good fuel economy, so we must be doing something right. In fact, it's so easy that I am starting to wonder why I even need my pit crew.

For more information, look for "The Experts Guide to 100 Things Everyone Should Know How to Do" by Samantha Ettus, www.theexpertsguideto.com.