

Consumer Corner

Tips For Saving Money At The Pump

(NAPSA)—As the economy continues to slow down, it might pay for drivers to follow suit.

That's the advice from experts who say that driving with the cruise control set to 65 mph, rather than driving aggressively and at speeds of 75 to 85, can improve fuel economy by as much as 35 percent.

Additionally, simple things, like lightening the load in your trunk and taking luggage racks off your car to improve its aerodynamics, can improve efficiency by 21 percent.

The following ideas might help as well. They come from Edmunds.com, which offers tips on saving fuel, keeping your car well maintained and getting the most out of your vehicle:

- **Cut The AC**—Driving with the windows open instead of using the air conditioner can boost fuel economy by 9.5 percent.

- **Drop The Tailgate**—In a test run by the Web site, driving a pickup truck with the tailgate down (with cruise control set for 65 mph) brought a 1 percent improvement in fuel economy.

- **Don't Idle**—A car gets zero miles per gallon while it sits motionless with the engine running.

- **Plan Your Trips**—Since engines don't operate at maximum efficiency until warmed up, try to



Driving habits could affect your car's fuel efficiency.

map out your errands so that you drive to your farthest destination first and then make your other stops on the way home. Driving two or three miles and then stopping and letting the car cool down before making another short trip wastes fuel.

- **Stay On Top Of Maintenance**—Out-of-spec suspension alignments, clogged air filters and underinflated tires cut fuel efficiency. Be sure to bring your car in for regular maintenance, especially if the “check engine light” is on.

As a final tip, remember to follow maintenance recommendations in your car's owner's manual. Something as basic as adding heavier-weight oil, like 10W-40 rather than the automaker-recommended 10W-20, can affect fuel efficiency.

For more information, visit www.edmunds.com.