

How to Save Gas in Your Vehicle

While it is always wise to conserve natural resources, the recent price of gasoline has made even the most wasteful people think twice. Whatever your motivation, here are some gas saving tips from the pros at the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE).



Monitor tires. Under inflated tires or poorly aligned wheels waste fuel by forcing

the engine to work harder. (Let the tires cool down before checking the air pressure.) Out-of-line wheels, as evidenced by uneven tread wear, should be

aligned by a professional. Remove unnecessary items from the vehicle. Store only essentials in the trunk. Less weight means better mileage.

Consolidate trips and errands. Some trips may be unnecessary. Also, try to travel when traffic is light so you can avoid stop-and-go conditions.

Observe speed limits. Speeding decreases your miles per gallon.

Drive gently. Sudden accelerations guzzle gas. Anticipate traffic patterns ahead and adjust your speed gradually.

Use windows and air conditioning wisely. Your mileage should improve if you keep the windows closed at highway speeds, since air drag is reduced. This is true even with the air conditioning on—assuming that the system is in good working order. But turn the air conditioning off in stop-and-go traffic to save fuel.

Keep your engine "tuned up." A well-maintained engine operates at peak efficiency, maximizing gas mileage. Follow the service schedules listed in the owner's manual. Replace filters and fluids as recommended; have engine performance problems (rough idling, poor acceleration, etc.) corrected at

a repair facility. Given today's high-tech engines, it's wise to have this type of work done by auto technicians who are ASE certified in engine performance.

These conservation tips will not only save gasoline, they'll help extend the life of your vehicle. Win-win, indeed.

Ideas for Floors in Your Home

Your home is your paradise and if you are planning to renovate your home, goes for the changes that are not only eye catching but also comfortable for you and your family. Remodeling of the home is associated with revolutions and amendments adjusted in every nook and cranny of the home. If you are going to change the flooring of your home there are some tips for flooring of different parts of you house.

Bedroom flooring:
There are plenty options when it comes to flooring in your bedroom. Being the most private and personalized part of your home, your bedroom is the place which grabs a big part of your budget whenever you are remodeling your home. You can use carpet, tile, hardwood, bamboo, cork or laminate. Play with different materials in different rooms. You can opt for striped light and dark shades in your boy's room so that if your son is going to create mess, which is unavoidable, the flooring can withstand the burden. Also the flooring can bear heavy traffic of the folks coming in the bedroom. For more powerful scratch and water resistant flooring you can choose laminate.

Living room flooring:
It is the most used part that withholds most of the traffic coming in and out of the house. It is highly recommended that the flooring be strong enough that it can endure all such amendments done with your furniture or to the increasing and decreasing ratio of visitors. For this purpose you can opt for hardwood flooring. Being classy and sophisticated in look it is the perfect choice for your living room whenever you are remodeling your home.

Kitchen flooring:
Design the floor of your kitchen in such a way that it not only looks pretty but also gives a practical impression. You can choose from vinyl, tile, natural stone, wood, cork or laminate. A floor covering that is water resistant and durable such as tile is a best choice to protect against potential water damage. Make sure when you choose your floor to order a little extra of the product in the event that you drop something like a pot on your floor. If the flooring material is damaged, you will be sure to have enough to repair the floor because often floor manufacturers have high turnover of their products to insure a continual buying cycle. Most flooring contractors add 5-10% additional square footage of the flooring product to their purchase order to insure they have enough for the project and to provide the client with a little extra flooring for future use.

Don't Let Car Troubles Ruin Holiday Travels

As the holidays approach, motorists should make certain their vehicle is up to the rigors of winter travel. Autumn has traditionally been a busy time for carcare activities. Whether you do your own maintenance or depend on the pros, fall service let's you undo the wear and tear of summer's tough conditions while getting ready for colder weather ahead.

The following tips from the experts at the nonprofit National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) should give you a road map to fall car care. According to officials at ASE, "Cold weather will only make existing problems worse. A breakdown, while never pleasant, can be deadly in the winter."

First things first
Read your owner's manual and follow the manufacturer's recommended service schedules.

Engine Performance
Get engine driveability problems (hard starts, rough idling, stalling, diminished power, etc.) corrected at a good repair shop. Cold weather makes existing problems worse. Replace dirty filters air, fuel, PCV, etc.

Fuel
Put a bottle of fuel deicer in your tank once a month to help keep moisture from freezing in the fuel line. Note, too, that a gas tank that's kept filled helps prevent moisture from forming.

Oil
Change your oil and oil filter as specified in your manual more often (every 3,000 miles or so) if your driving is mostly stop-and-go or consists of frequent short trips.

Cooling System
The cooling system should be flushed and refilled as recommended. The level, condition, and concentration of the coolant should be checked periodically. (A 50/50 mix of antifreeze and water is usually recommended.) DIYers, never remove the radiator cap until the engine has thoroughly cooled! The tightness and condition of drive belts, clamps, and hoses should be checked by a pro.

Heater/Defroster
The heater and defroster must be in good working condition for passenger comfort and driver visibility.

Windshield Wipers
Replace old blades. If your

climate is harsh, purchase rubberclad (winter) blades to fight ice buildup. Stock up on windshield washer solvent you'll be surprised how much you use. Carry an ice-scraper.

Battery
The only accurate way to detect a weak battery is with professional equipment. Routine care: Scrape away corrosion from posts and cable connections; clean all surfaces; retighten all connections. If battery caps are removable, check fluid level monthly.

A word of caution:
Removal of cables can cause damage or loss of data/codes on some newer vehicles. Check your manual. Be sure to avoid contact with corrosive deposits and battery acid. Wear eye protection and rubber gloves.

Lights
Inspect all lights and bulbs; replace burned out bulbs; periodically clean road grime from

all lenses. To prevent scratching, never use a dry rag.

Exhaust System
Your vehicle should be placed on a lift and the exhaust system examined for leaks. The trunk and floorboards should be inspected for small holes. Exhaust fumes can be deadly.

Tires
Worn tires will be of little use in winter weather. Examine tires for remaining tread life, uneven wearing, and cupping; check the sidewalls for cuts and nicks. Check tire pressure once a month. Let the tires "cool down" before checking the pressure. Rotate as recommended. Don't forget your spare, and be sure the jack is in good condition.

Emergencies
Carry gloves, boots, blankets, flares, a small shovel, sand or kitty litter, tire chains, a flashlight, and a cell phone. Put a few "high-energy" snacks in your glove box.

Investing in New Vinyl Windows

Your home is probably your most valuable asset, but to maintain its value you need to make continual improvements. One of the most substantial renovations you can do to increase the value of your home is to install vinyl replacement windows. Homeowners are realizing that vinyl windows can dramatically improve a home's external appearance. They can also add to a home's value because they block external noise and help to conserve energy - two features that today's home buyers are looking for. They are a relatively easy project to complete, and are becoming more and more affordable.

In order to get the most benefit from a window replacement project, you'll need to take two important steps.

First, come up with a realistic budget. A window replacement project doesn't always go as smoothly as planned. Take the time to research the wide variety of replacement windows on the market and what the installation project will involve. Before you begin, it's important to look at the costs of different brands of windows and decide on the features you want and need. You should also determine if there is any part of the project that you can do yourself. This can result in significant savings. One of the smartest things to do is to talk to other homeowners who have done replacement window projects. This is probably the best way to get an accurate idea of how much is really involved. One thing you don't want to do is replace windows on a room-by-room basis. It might save you a little money, but the results will be less than appealing and can detract from the house's exterior appearance.

The second step is to find a qualified and reliable contractor to complete the project. While replacing vinyl windows can sometimes be a do-it-yourself project, taking on every window in the home can be an overwhelming job. A professional can usually get the job done faster and is better able to deal with any installation problems that come up. You might be able to save some money by doing a part of the project yourself, like removing and disposing of the old windows. Be very careful to choose an experienced and reliable window installer. Always check references and talk to previous customers. Ask to see before and after pictures of the contractor's projects. Be sure to ask how many replacement window projects he has done and what his experience has been. Vinyl replacement windows are a substantial home renovation that can have a huge impact on the value of your home. They are an important feature and it doesn't pay to skimp on quality just to save a little bit of money. Better quality windows will provide more benefits in the long run, including higher energy efficiency and an attractive, updated home exterior.

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