



ENERGY E-TIPS

September 1, 2010

Driving and Car Maintenance Tips

Americans have been told that transportation accounts for two-thirds (67%) of their oil use – largely in the form of gasoline. Fortunately, there are many ways to improve gas mileage. This edition of ENERGY E-TIPS will look into some simple driving and maintenance tips that could help Arkansans to beat the high cost of fuel usage and save some money on the road. In addition, some of these tips could help all of us drive safe.



Driving tips on the road:

- Avoid long time idling (0 mile per gallon, mpg). No more than 30 seconds of idling on winter days is needed to warm up your vehicle. Longer time idling wastes fuel and increases emissions. Cars with larger engines may waste more gas than cars with smaller engines. The best way to warm up your car is to drive it.
- Avoid high speeds. Driving speed affects your gas mileage. Gas mileage drops rapidly above 60 mph. The fuelconomy.gov Web site shows how driving speed affects gas mileage.
- Use cruise control on the highway. It helps you maintain a constant speed and, in most cases, will save gas.
- Avoid aggressive driving. Speeding, rapid acceleration, and hard braking wastes your gas. It can lower your highway gas mileage by 33% and city mileage by 5%.
- Drive sensibly. Sensible driving around town can save you up to 5% of gasoline.
- Use overdrive gearing. If available, use your override gear. Your car's engine speed will go down. This saves gas and reduces wear.
- Use air conditioning only when necessary. Operating the air conditioner on "Max" can reduce mpg by 5 – 25% compared to not using it.
- Clear out your car. Extra weight decreases gas mileage.
- Reduce drag. Place items inside the car or trunk rather than on roof racks. A roof rack or carrier provides additional cargo space and may allow you to buy a smaller car. However, a loaded roof rack can decrease your fuel economy by 5%.
- Combine errands into one trip. Several short trips, each one taken from a cold start, can use twice as much fuel as one trip covering the same distance when the engine is warm. If you combine errands into one trip, you drive fewer miles and use less fuel.
- Check into telecommuting, carpooling and public transit. To cut mileage and car maintenance costs.
- Ride your bicycle. Your bike is using 0 gallon per mile. If possible, use your bike. The website ibike.org lists several benefits supporting bike riding.

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Car maintenance tips:

- Use the grade of motor oil recommended by your car's manufacturer. Select the right oil. Using the manufacturer's recommended grade of motor oil can improve gas mileage by 1 to 2%, resulting in annual savings of up to \$30. Motor oil that says "Energy Conserving" on the API performance symbol contains friction-reducing additives. Also, change your oil to extend the life of your vehicle and to save even more money. **Remember** to recycle used oil, which with proper controls, can be safely reused as a fuel.
- Keep tires properly inflated and aligned. Inflate your tires to improve your gasoline mileage by around 3.3%.
- Get regular car maintenance checks and engine tune-ups. Fixing a car that is noticeably out of tune or has failed an emissions test can improve its gas mileage by an average of 4% and save up to 25 gallons of gasoline and about \$55. This could help avoid fuel economy problems caused by worn spark plugs, dragging brakes, low transmission fluid, or transmission problems.
- Replace clogged air filters. Replacing a clogged or dirty air filter keeps impurities from damaging the inside of your engine. It could improve gas mileage by as much as 10% and protect your engine in old model cars.

Long-term savings:

- Consider buying a highly fuel-efficient vehicle. A fuel-efficient vehicle, a hybrid vehicle, or an alternative fuel vehicle could save you a lot at the gas and help the environment. See the Fuel Economy Guide for more on buying a new fuel-efficient car or truck. When buying a new or used vehicle, think high gas mileage. Check out the U.S. Department of Energy's Web site or look for a SmartWay© certified vehicle on EPA's Green Vehicle Guide for information on fuel-efficient vehicles.

References:

- <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/driving.html>
- <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/drive.shtml>
- <http://drivesmarterchallenge.org/money-saving-tips/Default.aspx>
- <http://drivesmarterchallenge.org/money-saving-tips/Default.aspx>
- <http://www.ibike.org/encouragement/benefits.htm>

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