

Driving habits, car maintenance can save gas, money

Gas prices are creeping up towards \$2 per gallon. As prices go up, more and more of your income goes to transportation expense. Here are some tips for saving gasoline from the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Energy:

Save while you drive

- Slow down — Each 5 miles per hour that you drive over 60 mph costs you an additional 10 cents a gallon.
- Use overdrive gears — Your car's engine speed decreases when you use overdrive, reducing fuel consumption and engine wear.
- Use cruise control — Maintaining a consistent speed reduces fuel consumption.
- Drive sensibly — Avoiding unnecessary braking and acceleration improves fuel economy by 5 to 10 percent.
- Avoid unnecessary idling — Idling gets you 0 miles per gallon, so turn off your engine if you anticipate a long wait.
- Remove excess weight from the trunk — An extra 100 pounds in the trunk reduces a typical car's fuel economy by up to 2 percent.

Save by maintaining your car

- Keep your engine tuned — A poorly tuned engine increases fuel consumption by up to 20 percent.
- Keep tires properly inflated and aligned — Underinflated tires increase fuel consumption by up to 6 percent.
- Change your oil — Clean oil reduces friction of moving parts and removes harmful substances from the engine.
- Use recommended grade of oil — Using the wrong grade of oil for your car increases fuel consumption by up to 2 percent.
- Check and replace air filters regularly — Clogged filters increase fuel consumption by up to 10 percent.

Save by planning your trips

- Combine trips and errands — Several short trips taken from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as a longer, multipurpose trip covering the same distance when the engine is warm.
- Take advantage of vanpools or carpools — Consider sharing the ride or taking public transportation when possible.

Fuel additives or “gas-saving” products

Be wary of any gas-saving claims for automotive devices or oil and gas additives. The Environmental Protection Agency has evaluated or tested more than 100 such devices and additives and has not found any product that significantly improves gas mileage.

For more information on saving gasoline, visit <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/drive.shtml>, or <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/autos/gasave.htm>. ■