

Top 10 Tips

To make your fuel go further



Essential driver support



GE imagination at work



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1. Keep up the pressure

As well as improving vehicle safety and extending the life of your tyres, correctly inflated tyres can also reduce fuel consumption. Under-inflated tyres create more resistance when a vehicle is moving resulting in your engine using more fuel to deal with the increase pressure created. For every 1psi (pounds per square inch) a tyre is under-inflated, the fuel consumption increases by 3%.

You should check your tyre pressure regularly in accordance to manufacturer guidelines, especially when setting off on a long journey. It's important to check tyre pressure regularly. It's not always apparent that air is being lost, but it generally escapes at the rate of up to two pounds of air every month. More air is usually lost during warm weather, so more regular checks are needed when temperatures rise.

2. Smoothly does it

Adopt a smooth driving style - accelerating and braking gently will improve fuel consumption. Aggressive driving can lead to fuel consumption increasing by 35%. Small changes in driving style can make a big difference:-

- Anticipate the road ahead and take your foot off the accelerator earlier so your brakes have to do less work.
- Leave sufficient distance between yourself and the car in front of you so you have sufficient space to anticipate and react to traffic movements ahead.
- Where possible, use the display in your vehicle dashboard to show fuel consumption during your journey. You will soon see the difference you can make by adopting a smoother driving style.

If you can anticipate the need to brake then you can ease off the accelerator earlier and coast more, saving fuel. Every time you brake you are converting your precious fuel into heat.

3. Plan your journey

Plan your route before you set off to reduce the chance of getting lost and to avoid getting stuck in traffic. This will allow you to take the most efficient route to your destination. Look at websites, check your Sat Nav system and other information sources that identify if there are any major incidents or roadworks that will affect your journey. This will allow you to make alternative plans in advance.

Combine short journeys - A car engine takes up to 5 miles to reach its normal running temperature and as cold engines use twice as much fuel, combining a number of small journeys into one will save fuel. Did you know that 40% of urban journeys are less than 1.2 miles and have a typical higher average fuel consumption? Combine short journeys or consider leaving the car at home.

4. Shop around

Recent studies have shown that fuel prices can fluctuate as much as 5p per litre in any given area. With this in mind, it makes sense to shop around to find the most competitive price on the forecourt in your local area.

When refuelled, make sure you fully tighten your fuel cap. Up to 30 gallons of fuel can be lost annually due to evaporation when the fuel cap is not fully tightened.

If not essential, don't fill your car up to the top with fuel. This will add weight to your car and will lead you to burning more fuel.

5. Keep in shape

Keep your vehicle in good shape - you should always carry out recommended maintenance as found in the schedule laid out by the vehicle's manufacturer. A poorly maintained car or van almost invariably uses more fuel. Start by using correct oil and changing worn out spark plugs and reduce consumption by up to 5%.

Lose weight - clutter in your boot and back seat is extra weight that your engine must carry around. For every extra 100 lbs (45kg) you carry, your fuel efficiency can drop by 1-2%. You can reduce the workload and save fuel by removing all excess weight from your vehicle - including buggies, golf clubs, tools, footwear and paperwork.

6. Why resist?

Did you know that approximately 50% of the energy required to operate at motorway speed is devoted to overcoming wind resistance? This becomes even greater when roof racks, roofboxes and bicycle racks are attached to your car.

Make sure that these are removed when not in use as the resistance dramatically increases fuel consumption. When you have to transport bulky objects, securing on the roof is acceptable, but using a trailer is more economical.

7. Know your limits

The faster you drive the more fuel you consume. Speed limits help you reduce your fuel consumption as well as maintain safety.

The most economical speed is 55-65mph. Any faster, and fuel efficiency falls rapidly. For example, driving at 85mph uses 40% more fuel than at 70mph.

8. Watch your revs

You should be changing gear between 1500 and 2000rpm (diesel cars) and between 2000 rpm 2500rpm (petrol cars).

Driving slowly in a higher gear burns less fuel. It's best to change up a gear whenever you can. Most new cars include a system on their dashboard indicating the optimum time to change gear. You should aim to be in 4th or 5th gear by the time you reach 30mph.

When driving up-hill it is better to remain in a higher gear. When driving downhill it is recommended to select a gear which maintains a constant speed with the minimum need for braking.

9. Don't idle

Improvements to modern vehicle technology have eliminated the need to warm up the engine. You should not leave your vehicle idling as it wastes fuel. Where possible turn the ignition key off when stationary on a driveway.

If caught in a traffic queue for more than 20 seconds turn off your engine to reduce your emissions and fuel consumption. If you have a new vehicle, utilise the stop/start engine technology if available.

10. Don't be conned

Air-conditioning can increase fuel consumption by 10% by putting an added strain on your engine.

Refrain from using air-conditioning whilst driving at low speeds; it is more efficient to drive with the windows open. However, at speeds in excess of 60 mph the effect of air-con is less noticeable, making it more efficient to use your air-con than wind your windows down.



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