

Simple Ways To Improve Fuel Economy

The economy might be slowly recovering, but saving money is still foremost on the minds of many people. Men and women have looked to save money in a variety of ways, including at the gas pump. While there's little drivers can do to reduce the cost of a gallon of gas, there are ways they can make the gas last a little longer.

Improving fuel economy is nothing new to many motorists, but some might still be surprised at the myriad ways they can get more bang for their buck with regards to fuel costs.



© Toyota

• DON'T BREAK THE LAW.

Obedying the speed limit might save your life, and it can also save you money. Typically, fuel economy decreases rapidly as a car reaches and surpasses 60 miles per hour. According to the U.S. Department of Safety, drivers can assume that each five miles per hour they drive over 60, they are paying an additional \$0.26 per gallon for gas.

• EMPTY THE TRUNK.

Though it might be more convenient to keep your golf clubs in the trunk of your car, extra and unnecessary cargo in a vehicle's trunk drastically reduces fuel economy. An extra 100 pounds in a vehicle can reduce miles per gallon by as much as 2 percent, so keep a trunk free of items that aren't absolutely necessary.

• STOP IDLING.

Many people let their car idle for several minutes on cold mornings. But today's newer vehicles don't really need to idle to warm up, and idling can be very taxing on fuel economy. Depending on the size of the car, idling can use between a quarter to a half gallon of fuel per hour. If you still insist on letting the vehicle idle, a few seconds of idling should be enough to warm the engine up.

• EMBRACE CRUISE CONTROL ON LONG DRIVES WITHOUT LOTS OF STOPPING AND STARTING.

Maintaining a constant speed, which a vehicle does when drivers utilize cruise control, can help save fuel, as it's less taxing on an engine to continue at one speed than it is to constantly switch back and forth between high and low speeds.

• INFLATE THE TIRES.

Poorly inflated tires lower gas mileage and also pose a safety hazard. The DOE notes that properly inflated tires can improve gas mileage by as much as

3 percent. Ideal tire pressure is different for each vehicle, so check your vehicle's owner's manual for recommended tire pressure. Some vehicle manufacturers also include the recommended tire pressure on the vehicle itself, be it in the driver's side door jamb or in the vehicle's glove compartment. Tire pressure printed on the tire's sidewall might not be the ideal tire inflation for your particular vehicle, so always adhere to the manufacturer's recommendation instead.

• DRIVE THE CAR YOU NEED, NOT THE CAR YOU WANT.

Drivers who truly need to save money at the pump should consider the type of vehicle they're driving, and whether it's the car they need or the car they want. For instance, office workers who own a pickup truck but don't use it to haul items might want to consider a smaller vehicle that gets better gas mileage.

Improving fuel efficiency is a great way for motorists to save money and reduce the expenses associated with vehicle ownership.

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