

Money Saving Tips By Jim Alauria

Everyone who has been to that gas pump lately has seen an increase in the price of a gallon of fuel. Experts predict that prices will continue to rise with some even saying it could be over the \$5 per gallon mark this summer. With prices that high we all need to find ways to save. Here are some tips I have found throughout the years to improve gas mileage.

First, letting your car idle for long periods of time to warm up is no longer needed or recommended. Turn the car on for 30 seconds and then go. As long as your aren't pulling right out of your driveway onto the freeway at 70 mph you'll be fine. Americans waste approximately 3.8 million gallons everyday by voluntarily idling their vehicles. Today's vehicles run inefficiently when idling and are more efficient to start. Now obviously you aren't going to shut off your car every time you are at a stoplight, but next time you are waiting for that train to pass or are waiting for somebody to get out of the grocery store you'll save more fuel by shutting the car off than letting it idle.

Second, make sure you keep your tires properly inflated. This actually does two things for you. It helps ensure you won't prematurely wear out your tires by having too much or too little air in them. We have all seen those "highway crocodiles" (long pieces of tire tread) when driving on any of our highways. That usually happens by riding on under inflated tires too long. Also, properly inflated tires will maximize your fuel economy. Having underinflated tires will cause more friction and decrease your fuel economy. Most auto repair shops will adjust your pressure for you at no cost.

Third, make sure you keep your engine air, cabin and fuel filters clean. A dirty engine air filter restricts the amount of air the engine gets. Starving the engine for air will decrease fuel economy. Just think of a fireplace that doesn't have enough air. A dirty cabin air filter can cause debris to get into the blower motor and possibly cause damage. And just like your home AC unit, when there is a restriction of air flow then it will have to run more often to cool the car which requires the engine to burn more fuel. And a dirty fuel filter can allow debris to clog or damage the fuel injectors. All three of these filters are usually pretty inexpensive to replace and a reputable auto repair shop can tell you when you should replace each of them.

Finally, make sure your fluids are all topped off and clean. Fluids are designed to cool and lubricate the systems they are in. When fluids break down they lose some of their ability to lubricate and cool properly thus causing abnormal wear and tear. Most top auto repair shops will not only top off your fluids for you as part of their oil change service, but they will also check them for you any time just for your peace of mind.

The old cliché of "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." is very true when it comes to saving money on fuel and the routine maintenance of your vehicle. Take care of the little things regularly and I assure you that you will save money in the long haul.