

How to Save Money On Gas

Courtesy of: Lakeport Tire & Auto Service

*Gas prices keep going up, and the money in our wallet keeps evaporating more quickly. There are many ways you can **spend less** money on gas and reduce your overall fuel consumption.*

Take care of your car. A properly maintained vehicle will run more efficiently and give you better mileage, which saves you money in gas.

Maintain Tire Inflation. Top off the air in the tires every few weeks to the car manufacturer's recommended pressure. This is best done when the tires are cold (have not been driven on more than a mile or so) -- it is proper for them to have a few psi higher pressure after extensive driving, but filling them hot should generally be avoided unless they are very low on air to avoid inaccuracy. Excessive pressure adds very little efficiency and can cause bad handling and uneven tire wear.

Another important item is to keep your air filter clean. An air filter all clogged up with dirt and bugs don't let enough clean air through to efficiently burn fuel. Using a dirty air filter will cost you almost two miles per gallon in reduced fuel efficiency.

Replace spark plugs regularly. Worn spark plugs can cost another two miles per gallon. A spark plug can fire as many as 3,000,000 times for every thousand miles driven. A dirty spark plug also causes misfiring, which wastes fuel. Check the owner's manual for replacement recommendations.

Change your oil and oil filter. Limit friction between the moving parts of your engine by keeping your oil clean. Regular oil changes increases fuel economy and your vehicle's reliability.

Check vehicle gas caps. Gas caps that are damaged, loose or are missing altogether can cause gas to vaporize.

Purchase a Locking Gas Cap. Prevent thieves from stealing your gas with a locking gas cap. You pay money for your gas, why can't they? Deter thieves easily and very inexpensively. New gas caps can be purchased at automotive shops and parts centers. We suggest using a locking gas cap on all vehicles! We know getting gas can be a pain and you may not want to add an extra step to that process, but you will not only save money, but you prevent a thief from stealing what belongs to you.

Fill up efficiently. This involves three things:

- Fill the tank full. If you need to fill up, fill up all the way. The more money you try to save by adding \$10 today and then \$20 tomorrow will be wasted since each time you will have to travel to the station and wait for a pump. Instead, do it all at once to save time and money.
- Don't top up your tank between fills. It is wasted money and bad for the environment because it invariably forces liquid fuel into the evaporative emissions system where it overwhelms circuits that are supposed to only route fuel tank vapors to the engine while it is running and can be burned.
- Wait until you have a quarter tank but don't push this any further. Doing this can extend your gas because you are hauling a lighter fuel load. It also gives you the opportunity to buy more gas if you run across a bargain. However, in cold weather, you run an increased risk of condensation in the fuel tank. Running a car with less than a quarter tank can shorten the life of the electric fuel pump and running on empty will often destroy the pump.

Slow down. Rolling resistance is the dominant force below about 40 mph. Above that, every mph costs you mileage. Go as slow as traffic and your schedule will allow. Drive under 60-65 since air grows exponentially denser, in the aerodynamic sense, the faster we drive. To be precise, the most efficient speed is your car's minimum speed in it's highest gear, since this provides the best "speed per RPM" ratio. This is usually about 45 to 55 miles per hour.

Avoid idling. While idling, your car gets exactly 0 miles per gallon while starting the car uses the same amount as idling for 6 seconds. Park your car and go into the restaurant rather than idling in the drive-through. Idling with the air conditioning on also uses extra fuel. Also, avoid going so fast that you have to brake for someone. Whenever you brake, you waste the gas it took to get going that fast.
