Saving Energy:
Driving and Car Maintenance

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Introduction

Gasoline use for transportation accounts for about 67% of U.S. oil consumption. Increasing your fuel economy can save you money, reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and increase our country’s energy sustainability.

How Can I Increase My Fuel Economy?

- **Avoid driving at high speeds.** Mileage rates (miles per gallon, or mpg) drop rapidly when driving more than 60 miles per hour.
- **Avoid aggressive driving.** Accelerating and braking in stop-and-go traffic lowers your fuel economy by approximately 33% for highway driving and by 5% for city driving.
- **Do not idle a vehicle for longer than 30 seconds.** Idling wastes fuel and increases emissions. Driving is the most efficient way to warm a vehicle.
- **Minimize unnecessary loads.** Extra weight decreases gas mileage by 1–2% for every 100 pounds of weight. Roof-rack loading and towing a trailer generally reduce fuel economy by 5% or more.
- **Minimize driving on hilly or mountainous terrain.**
- **Use cruise control and automatic overdrive.** Cruise control maintains a constant speed, and overdrive gears lower engine speed. Constant and lowered engine speed reduces engine wear and saves gas.
- **Plan ahead.** Minimize shopping trips and plan your route to avoid backtracking. Carpool or work at home if possible.
- **Walk or bike** for work or shopping, if possible.
- **When purchasing a new car, look for excellent gas mileage** (30–50 mpg).

Auto Maintenance

- **Tune up your vehicle engine regularly.**
- **Align tires and inflate to the recommended pressure** to improve gasoline mileage by more than 3%.
- **Replace clogged air filters** to improve gas mileage by as much as 10%.
Fix a faulty oxygen sensor to improve a vehicle's mileage by as much as 40%.

Use the recommended grade of motor oil. Other grades can lower your vehicle's gasoline mileage by 1–2%.

What's New?

Hybrid-electric vehicles utilize the benefits of both gasoline engines and electric motors. They have regenerative braking, electric motor drive capabilities, and the ability to automatically start and shut off.

Electric vehicles run on electric motors powered by rechargeable battery packs. They are typically energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Hydrogen fuel cell vehicles run on hydrogen gas rather than gasoline and emit no harmful emissions.

Where Can I Learn More?


References

