

Simple upkeep will pay off

Save money by keeping car tuned

Proper care and maintenance of your car can mean significant reductions in fuel consumption.

Start out by having your car's engine thoroughly tuned. A tune-up can mean nine to 15 percent better mileage.

- In your tune-up:
- Check spark plugs. Make sure yours are clean and all firing properly.
 - Then check distributor points unless your car has an electronic ignition.
 - Replace clogged and dirty air and oil filters.
 - Check for proper functioning of the

automatic choke — a sticking one will waste gas.

- Be sure the air-fuel mixture of the carburetor is adjusted.
- Change oil regularly. Use the correct weight oil as recommended in your car-owner's manual. A heavier oil will force the engine to use more fuel to overcome the oil's resistance, while too thin an oil may not provide enough protection to prevent engine damage.
- While you're getting your car tuned, check to see that the tires are balanced and wheels aligned. If they're not, they can create drag, forcing the engine to use

more power — more gasoline — while shortening tire life drastically. A bent frame could have the same effect.

- Check tire pressure on your car frequently. Underinflated tires increase rolling resistance and cut fuel economy, but don't overinflate by more than four pounds. This could cause rapid wear and cut tire contact with the road, causing a safety hazard. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations.
- An often overlooked item of care is the radiator thermostat. A defective one can increase fuel consumption by increasing engine warm-up time in cold weather.
- Automatic brake adjusters also

should be checked for improper operation which can create brake drag and increase fuel consumption.

- Once you've had your car tuned, don't forget about it. Keeping a car operating at peak performance and at peak fuel economy requires constant care. A car needs to be tuned at least twice a year, spring and fall, or as recommended in your car owner's manual.
- When you fill up with fuel, choose the correct octane for your particular car. Too low an octane could cause engine problems, spark plug fouling and reduced gasoline mileage. Avoid a higher octane fuel than required. You'll be wasting money.

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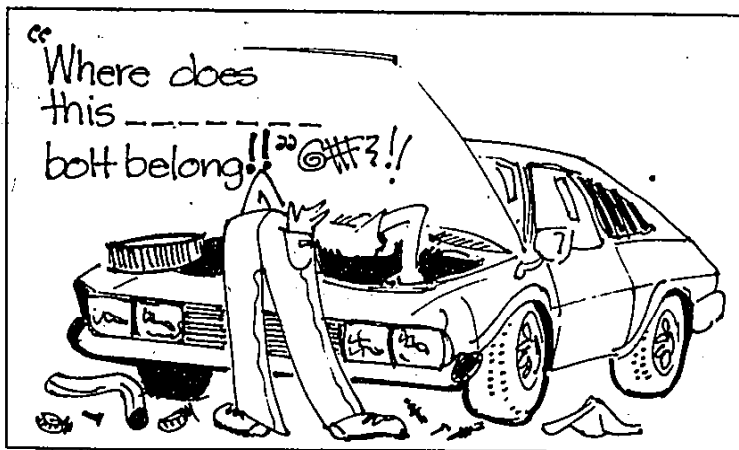
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Those dings can be fixed in your garage

Now's the time to fix the little nicks and scratches in your car's body — and it can be done in your own garage.

To repair minor nicks and scratches, you'll need sandpaper grades 240, 320, 400, 600, a sanding block, spot putty, masking tape, a clean cloth, pre-cleaner solvent, newspaper, pall, water and sponge.

But the most important thing is touch-up paint that matches the car's.

Normally, these paints are available for cars up to three years old. It's a good idea to buy the touch-up paint when you buy your new car. That way the match should be perfect.

If you can't find a commercial match, an automotive paint store usually can custom mix the paint.

The most common types of automotive paints are lacquers, enamels, and acrylic lacquers and enamels. Touch up your car with the same type paint originally used.

If the scratch is not too deep and rust does not appear, you won't have to repair the surface.

First clean the surface with soap and water and let it dry. Then use a pre-cleaning solvent to thoroughly remove any wax and grease.

Sanding isn't necessary if the area is small and the primer has not been chipped off. A temporary touch-up for protection and improved appearance is all that's necessary.

To touch up a scratch, use a bottle of paint and a small soft brush and let the paint flow into the scratched area.

If you're painting a small chip, just touch

the area with a brush; don't brush back and forth.

In either case, let the paint dry and apply several coats.

If the nick or scratch is deeper than the primer, sand and prime before painting. Wet-sand the area lightly using a 300 range sandpaper and taper the edge of the painted surface next to the scratch.

Place a wet sponge above the sanding surface and allow water to flow down while sanding.

Feather the area surrounding the bare metal, sanding less the farther away from the scratch. Remember the wider the feathered edge around the repaired surface, the better the finished surface will appear.

Don't be afraid to enlarge the scratched surface up to five times its original size.

You're now ready to mask, clean, apply primer, spot putty in small pin holes, finish sand with 600 paper and apply the finish coat.

When the surface has been prepared for painting, remove all traces of dust.

Practice spraying on a piece of cardboard. To use an aerosol can or spray gun hold the sprayer 6-10 inches from the surface and move it in a back and forth motion, overlapping each stroke just enough to ensure an even coat.

Never release paint from the container unless the sprayer is in motion, and remember to keep the sprayer moving when you stop spraying at the end of the stroke. This allows the paint to blend into the original painted surface.

The sprayer should be held parallel to the surface to eliminate a heavy and light concentration of paint on the surface.