

Keeping Car In Best Condition Is A Must For Winter Driving

A penny saved is a dollar squandered.

That's not how Poor Richard stated the case, but Poor Richard lived in an era before the automobile. If Destitute Dick had been a car owner he probably would have applied another of his famous sayings to the situation -- "A stitch in time saves nine."

While most of us today are more careful than ever about how we shell out our money, neglecting needed car maintenance is a false saving. Let's look at the facts.

Most of us depend upon our cars for our livelihoods. Cars take 82 percent of us to work and back. Most of us seek out recreation by automobile, with 86 percent of all travelers using automobiles.

Most Important for Season

So, particularly in the coming months of winter weather, it is important to keep your car in top running condition, whether we're going to work or play.

How, exactly, does stinting on maintenance lead to potentially major expenditures? Consider these examples:

- Merely washing and waxing your car to keep its body rust-free can mean a savings of several hundred dollars at trade-in time.

- Changing the oil and filter at recommended times can prevent premature and expensive engine wear.

- Regular tune-ups can cut gasoline bills, prevent road service bills and, in some cases, head off engine damage.

- Wheel alignments, rotating and balancing tires can make your tires last 25 percent longer.

- General car care makes your car safer and helps prevent accidents. Some estimates state that 10 percent of all fatal accidents can be attributed to neglect of maintenance.

Today, there are even stronger reasons for good car care. A well-maintained engine, tuned to manufacturer's specifications, pollutes significantly less than a neglected one. Even with pollution-reducing improvements on the new cars, maintenance is the key to keeping pollution levels low.

Best Car Expenditure of Winter

Your investment in keeping your car in condition may be the best expenditure of this season.

Visit your favorite service outlet soon to begin reaping the rewards of that investment -- safer, surer performance from your car.

Tune-Up Cure For Air Pollution

They came to get a free tune-up. They left with the realization that a neglected engine is a major contributor to the air pollution problem.

When engineering students at the University of Detroit decided to help observe Engineering Week by offering free tune-ups to the public, the students did not anticipate the response.

Seeking to dramatize the effects of under-maintenance on harmful emissions, the students found 150 cars waiting in line at a campus facility. It was more than they could handle so they invited excess numbers of car owners back for a tune-up the following week.

Additional openings for the second week's clinics were exhausted in 15 minutes as the public phoned in for appointments.

What was the result of the Clinic's study?

After tune-up the average hydrocarbon emissions were reduced 52 per cent.

And the average carbon monoxide emissions were reduced 58 per cent.

According to clinic organizers Bob Kaczorowski and John Smreker, "The goals that were set for the tune-up were 400 parts-per-million of hydrocarbons and a 2.0 per cent carbon monoxide. The average HC reading coming in was 644 PPM. The average CO count was 3.06 per cent.

"After tune-up the average HC count was 312 and the average CO count was 1.3 per cent.

While most of the car owners were more motivated to bring their vehicles in for free service rather than concern for pollution, the project directors were somewhat optimistic.

Kaczorowski and Smreker commented, "After seeing what a difference a tune-up can make in their car's performance, mileage and pollution, we feel we have won a few converts."

Keep Wheels Aligned

Your new tires can be expected to last longer if they are properly balanced and aligned. But even the best of them may live a short life if either of these factors is ignored.

It is not unusual for misalignment to scrub off a third of a tire's tread. This can amount to several times the price of the wheel alignment job that could have prevented such waste and would have made your car a safer one.

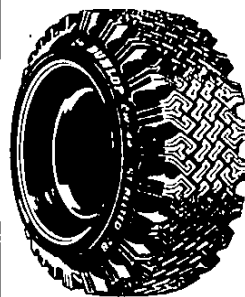
How do you know if your car's wheels need aligning? Your first clue may come from erratic steering. The car may wander or pull from one side to the other. Sometimes misalignment causes a shimmy similar to the action of an out-of-balance tire.

Clue number two: For this, you have to get out and look closely at the tread wear on your tires.

If tires appear to be worn more at the outer edges than at the center (or vice versa), your problem may be nothing more than improper inflation. But tires worn more on one side than the other, or otherwise unevenly worn, probably are suffering from misalignment.

Your mechanic can help you differentiate between inflation, alignment and balance problems.

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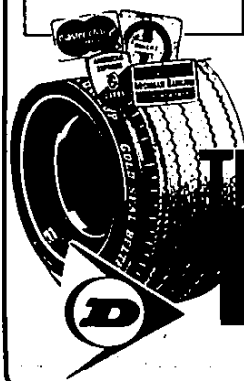
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