

Easy Tips Make Road Trips Painless – for You and the Planet

Whether you're planning your road trip for business or pleasure, one thing's certain – you don't want your travel dollars getting siphoned away with frequent refueling while your car pumps greenhouse gases into the atmosphere!

How to keep your car running lean and clean? Even if you drive a clunker, you can improve its performance with these simple tips.

Take Care of Your Car

Naturally, a well-maintained car will perform most efficiently. For the best fuel economy, stay up to date on these basic maintenance tasks:

- *Don't postpone tune-ups*
Following the manufacturer's schedule for tune-ups will increase your fuel efficiency by 6%, and keep roughly 580 pounds of greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere each year.
- *Clean or replace your air filter*
Most manufacturers advise replacing your air filter every 15,000 miles. Even after 5,000 miles, however, the filter gets clogged enough to reduce your car's fuel efficiency by up to 7%. It's easy to prevent this – every time you wash your car, lift the hood and vacuum the filter.
- *Check your tire pressure*
Proper inflation improves gas mileage by 3% in a well-maintained car. Underinflated tires, however, can drop your mileage. Keep a tire gauge handy, especially in cool weather – your tires lose pressure with every 10-degree temperature drop.

Tips from Truckers and Troopers

You can continue to save gas on the road with these tips from the pros:

- *Travel light*
Empty your trunk and your backseat of everything except the essentials for your trip, and you'll gain 2% in fuel efficiency for every 100 pounds you jettison.
- *Slow down*
Driving over 55 isn't just dangerous - for every 10 mph you add, you lose 5 miles per gallon and add 1,500 pounds of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere! Setting cruise control keeps you steady at 55 and yields roughly 100 extra miles to the tank.
- *Avoid idling*
Every two minutes of idling uses enough gas to travel about a mile...without getting anywhere! Just ten seconds of idling uses more fuel – and produces more emissions - than turning off and restarting the engine.
- *Keep your cool*
Above 40 mph, using your A/C will reduce drag and improve fuel efficiency. Below 40, however, you'll do better by opening the windows.

When you've done everything you can to improve your car's efficiency, you can help neutralize its impact for one year by purchasing carbon offsets based on your mileage. For more information about carbon offsets, or other ways of greening your car, home, and office, contact Phila Hoopes at phila.baltimore@greenirene.com, or call 410-362-2982.