

Car Maintenance and Repairs

Driving an automobile is a luxury that most of us take for granted. Automobiles are the primary means of transportation in United States, with ninety percent of American adults owning or previously owning a car or truck. What we don't realize is that operating a car or truck is a responsibility that can bring serious consequences. Every year in the United States alone, more than ten thousand vehicular accidents occur. An average of four hundred Americans die each year as the result of automotive accidents. It's a tragic figure, especially when you consider that many of these accidents could be prevented with proper maintenance and routine check-ups. Keeping your car well-maintained means reducing the risk of mishap or even death, and protecting your loved ones and fellow drivers.

Before hitting the road, be sure to conduct these checkups regularly:

Tires

Most Americans use all-season tires. These tires should carry you safely from season to season, but it is imperative that you check the tires regularly for wear or damage. Ideally, tires should be checked on a weekly basis.

Brakes

The brake system

serves one main purposes: to slow down or stop the car when it is needed. If you step on the brake pedal and it goes all the way to the floor, you've got trouble. Late-model automobiles are equipped with a brake warning light. This dashboard indicator will light up if something is wrong with your brake system. If your brake warning light indicates trouble, it is imperative that you check the brake system immediately. Consult your owner's manual for maintenance advice, and call an experienced mechanic for repairs. Brake repairs or replacements are no job for a weekend or hobby mechanic.

Headlights

In 2005, over 2,300 pedestrians died because drivers suffered eye problems or had faulty headlights in the automobiles. Properly maintained vehicle headlights help you drive safely, and see more clearly. Replace your headlight bulbs at least once per year.

Wipers

Many people don't think of changing their wiper blades until it is too late. This is one of the easiest and most inexpensive parts of the car to maintain. Change your wiper blades twice a year, in the spring and just before winter.

There are 10 common reasons why automobile owners visit the mechanic:

1. Electronic/Ignition control
2. Suspension/steering
3. Electrical problem
4. Brake system
5. Oil change/filters/lube
6. Exhaust

system

7. Radiator repairs
8. Fuel system/carburetor
9. Clutch/transmission
10. Air conditioning system

Routine check

ups and proper maintenance of a car be expensive, and budget restrictions are often the leading factors in keeping car owners from living up to their responsibilities. This does not need to be a problem. The key is in knowing how to save on car maintenance and repairs. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) confirmed that \$20 billion has been wasted on unnecessary auto repairs due to fraud and incompetence.

If your car is not performing to its full potential, remember the following tips to help you save money on repairs:

Preventive Maintenance

Be your car's best

friend, and you can save a bundle. By conducting regular preventative maintenance, such as regular oil changes and radiator flushes, you prevent unnecessary damage to the car and save a lot of money in the long run. Regular checkups by a qualified repairperson will keep your car running better, longer.

Conserve

Even automobiles need to take a break

now and then. If you drive your car everyday the miles will add up quickly, and damage can occur prematurely. To avoid this, consider carpooling with friends and coworkers. Ask around to form your own carpool group. You'll all save on maintenance, and you'll be able to pool your fuel and parking expenses.

Estimate

Before choosing a mechanic

to repair your car, be sure to get a written estimate. If the mechanic wants more than your budget can afford, shop around. Compare estimates to find the best deal. Just be sure that you are paying for quality service.

Do

It Yourself

You'll be surprised at how much you can accomplish after doing a little research. Read over your owner's manual from time to time. Learn as much as you can about your car. Understand potential problems and how to solve them. For example, that mysterious clunking noise might be bothersome, but could be as simple to fix as tightening a bolt. Regular maintenance tasks like oil changes and radiator flushes are fairly easy to do if you understand your vehicle and take the time to do the job properly.

As

an automobile owner, you have a responsibility to keep your car properly maintained at all times. Consider it an investment in your car's future, and remember that it could save a life.