

10 Tips for driving green

Not ready to trade in your ride for an electric car? We think you'll be surprised at how simple it is to make your daily drive a little greener.



1) Take care of your car

Noah Gordon, creator of the [Car Care Check](#) mobile app that helps customers diagnose their vehicle's problem before visiting the mechanic, says, "You don't have to drive a hybrid to drive green." Gordon explains that the average driver who logs 15,000 miles per year can save 56 gallons of gas annually by maintaining properly inflated tires, keeping a properly tuned engine and using the appropriate engine oil. "Since every gallon of gas burned emits a whopping 19 pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, that's a reduction of 1,064 pounds of greenhouse gases for each conscientious driver," he says.

2) Put your car on a diet

Have you seen those grueling competitions on *The Biggest Loser* where competitors have to strap on extra weight while slogging through obstacle courses we wouldn't wish on our worst enemy? That additional poundage makes the challenges ridiculously difficult and turbocharges their "burn rate." The point we're trying to make (in reality-TV

terms) is that more weight requires more energy — or in the case of our vehicles, additional gas consumption. Remove all the junk from your trunk to lighten your load and reduce your fuel consumption.

3) Be a smooth operator

If you tend to accelerate and break with a lead foot, you're not just annoying your passengers, you're burning additional fuel. “The best way to save at the pump is to become a light-footed driver,” says fuel-efficiency expert Dan Gray of MPGomatic.com. “Once you become cognizant of the pressure you exert on the accelerator pedal, you unlock the potential in your vehicle, no matter the technology under the hood.”

4) Sell your car

If you can swing it, sell your car and join a car-sharing service like Zipcar, Car2Go or Hertz On Demand. How does car sharing work? Users pay a small fee to join, reserve a car on the web or with a mobile app and then pay by the minute or hour for use of the vehicle. With the car-sharing model of transportation, trips are planned and consolidated, leading to less drive time and a reduction in emissions.

5) Heed the speed

Slow down. According to Ginnie Pritchett of AAA, decreasing vehicle speed by 10 mph can significantly increase fuel efficiency and decrease the associated carbon dioxide output.

6) Avoid extreme temperatures

Gray recommends protecting your vehicle from extreme hot and cold temperatures with [The CoolCap](#) car cover. “It looks funny,” says Gray, “but it really works.”

7) Tighten gas caps

Roger Clark, senior manager of the GM Energy Center, says a missing- or poorly-fitting gas cap can reduce fuel economy by 1 to 2 percent. Some auto manufacturers are getting rid of the gas cap altogether, eliminating the need for customers to remember to seal up the cap.

8) Install window film

Block solar heat, make your car more comfortable and use less conditioning by installing window film. You'll also be blocking UV rays in the side windows, thus reducing skin cancer risk. For about \$200 to \$300, you can significantly improve your "green driving" profile for the life of your car. New window films are now clear, for those of you who aren't fans of the "tinted" look.

9) Ride-share

Find other commuters or cross-country travelers and share a ride. "Millions of people drive great distances alone every day," says Steve Schoeffler the founder of [eRideShare](#). "It takes a lot of energy to push all those vehicles. Why not share the ride and reduce your carbon footprint!"

10) Roll down your windows

Air conditioning reduces fuel efficiency by up to 10 percent. Roger Clark, senior manager of GM Energy Center, says, "Avoid using the air conditioner by rolling down the windows at speeds below 40 mph."

* Expert Tip:

Dan Gray of [MPGomatic.com](#) says if your vehicle has an Instant MPG display, turn it on and use it. "This is the first step to enlightenment."

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