

CAR CARE AND TIPS

by

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This is a FREE ebook. You should give it away.

Disclaimer: Sorry, but I cannot be held responsible for any damages or injuries you will get during your operations of any of the task written in this e-book. I have my own scars!

All the information in this book is general.
Each vehicle is different, but the basics will be the same, or close.

If you have a rear wheel drive vehicle, the engine will be in-line...the cooling fan and water pump will be near the grill, or the front bumper.

If your vehicle is a front wheel drive, the engine will be side-ways...the front of the engine will be facing either the driver's side, or the passenger's side front wheel.

In the Fall of the year you need to get your vehicle ready for the winter months. In the Spring, you need to get it ready for the summer months. If this sounds strange, just think about it.

For several months, in the summer, you have put your vehicle through some severe driving conditions.

This is true for winter driving, too, especially if you live in very cold climates.

Think about the heat created by the engine and transmission/transaxle, and all the heat coming in through the outside air.

This causes hoses, belts, seals and other pliable parts to undergo a tremendous stress.

In April or May you should be thinking about *Summarizing* you vehicle. You want to do a close inspection of the belts: fan, alternator, water pump, air conditioner, and any other belt that is on your vehicle.

Look for cracks. Are there any cracks on the bottom side of the V belts?

Are the edges worn, or feathered? How low do they run in the pulleys?

That's another thing to check, the pulleys. If the belt rides lower than the top of the pulley, the belt and the pulley both, may be worn too much.

Now, just because the belt is below the top of the pulley does not necessarily mean the pulley is worn out.

It may just be the belt. But, when a belt starts wearing, it runs loose in the pulley and causes slippage.

This can wear the pulley down inside.

You need to replace them before they cause more damage.

If the belt slips in the pulley it creates heat. This heat can cause the bearings to burn out.

Check the belt for width at the top and outer edges.

If it is a 3/8" wide belt, and it's only 1/4" wide at the top, and the edges are frayed or fuzzy looking, it's worn out. It needs to be replaced.

Do you have a serpentine belt...that's the large, long belt that goes around all the pulleys on the front of the engine.

So, you do have the serpentine belt! ☺

Look at the ribs on the bottom of the belt.

Are they cracked? Are there any pieces missing?

If the serpentine belt is found to be in either condition, replace it.

If it breaks, you lose all power accessories: steering, brakes, etc.

Also, if it breaks, you lose your water pump, alternator, power steering, air conditioner...nothing works.

If the water pump quits, your engine will heat up quickly and either blow a head gasket, water hose, radiator, or the engine will just quit running...that's not good. ☹

Note: When you notice your amp gauge drop, or battery light come on, pull over to the side of the road and stop.

It would be a good idea to buy a spare and keep it in the vehicle just in case...you never know when one of these belts will break...just as my wife. ☹

Check all the hoses, too. These can go bad before you know it.

Are the heater hoses hard? Can you bend one without breaking it?

They are the two hoses about 1 inch in diameter coming from the firewall (the nose of the cab of your vehicle) going to the engine.

Are the upper and lower radiator hoses stiff as a board? Or, so soft you're afraid you will puncture it with your fingers and thumb?

What about the little by-pass hose from the water pump to the thermostat housing?

All vehicles may not have a by-pass hose; you just have to look at yours to see if it does.

Is it swelled out of proportion? Does it feel like a metal pipe?

If any of the hoses are terribly soft, that's not good either.

You want to replace any hose that is not pliable, or very flexible.

If it is soft, or hard and brittle, or has swelled to twice its normal size, replace it.

Look also at the ends where the clamps hold them.

Has the hose swelled above the clamps?

Is the wire clamp sunk deep into the hose?

These wire clamps are good for a few years, but if you have to change any hoses, it's best to change the clamps, too.

I hate those clamps that have three "little ears" sticking up.

I don't re-use them either. ☺

If you have to change a hose, look inside the ends of it.

Is there *crud* built up in there?

Is there a whitish-looking build-up on the part where the hose hooks up to?

Like the thermostat housing or upper radiator fixture?

If it is, you need to drain the radiator and flush it.

There's an article on flushing the cooling system. You can read it at:
<http://www.badcaragain.com> on the Articles page.

The anti-freeze/summer coolant has chemicals in it to help keep your vehicle from overheating or freezing.

These chemicals also cause problems throughout the system and cause the heater core and radiator to deteriorate and start leaking.

If you have a heater core to start leaking, you can see and feel that slicky coolant in the floorboard on the passenger's side...stinks, too. ☹

You really should flush the entire system at least every two years.

I know, you've never had to do it before.

But, you haven't had the kinds of products we have now.

When was the last time you replaced the heater core, or had the radiator repaired?

If never, and your vehicle is three or four years old, and you have never had the coolant system flushed, get ready! ☺

In the years prior to the 80's we really didn't have this problem; but now we do. ☹

You may think I own a *Anti-Freeze/Summer Coolant* company, but I don't. ☺

Another thing, while we are on the cooling system, check the debris in front of the radiator.

You'll be surprised at what you might find...where'd the bird come from?

The air conditioner condenser is directly in front of the radiator.

It catches the debris from the road and birds that fly too close. Oh, so that's where he came from. ☹

If this gets filled with leaves, feathers and just road debris, it will definitely slow the flow of fresh air to the radiator...causing your engine to run hot...plus, it causes extra heat for the air conditioner compressor.

Not good! Keep this area clean.

Look between these cooling components, if you can, for trash collection, even if you aren't following 'the truck'.

Wal-Mart bags are everywhere! ☺

If you are experiencing any amount of overheating, you should check the thermostat, hoses, and the radiator for blockage.

There are other things that will make a vehicle heat up, such as the water pump not working, engine cooling passage ways blocked, fan not operating properly...little things like these.

But the simplest and most common are the thermostat and the radiator.

In the "How To" ebooks, that I am in the process of writing, you will learn how to perform these tasks...replace the thermostat, water pump, etc.

Look for them! ☺

The "How To Change The Water Pump" is ready. See it at:
<http://www.badcaragain.com> on the ebooks page.

While you are checking all the coolant hoses, check the vacuum hoses as well.

These little hoses look naïve and innocent, but they play a large part in keeping your engine running smoothly.

And, they save on fuel. ☺

If they are stiff, they're bad.

If they are too soft, they're bad.

Replace them!

If the little rubber hose breaks, the component it goes to will not perform as it should.

If you have a vehicle that has a vacuum advance on the distributor, and the hose breaks, you have no timing advance when you push on the accelerator.

Not to get too technical, the timing has to be set up when more fuel is desired.

Otherwise, your engine will balk, then take off like a scared rabbit.

But, sometimes when it ‘balks’, it backfires; when it backfires, it could cause a ‘damaging’ fire!

If one breaks, you’ll have a vacuum leak.

This causes engine roughness, and, excess fuel...now, we don’t want that! ☹

Plus, the component that the hose goes to will not work, which causes more problems with other parts.

Check the engine oil.

You should do this every time you start to go somewhere...in the vehicle. ☺

You should always wait at least 20-30 minutes after the ignition switch has been turned off before you check the oil.

A lot of oil will be on top of the engine while it’s running, and needs time to run back to the oil pan before you check it.

Also, your vehicle should be on a level surface. Otherwise, you’ll not get a true reading.

How long has it been since you changed the oil and filter?

How many miles does it have on it?

This is important.

In hot, dusty climates you should change the oil and filter, and the air filter every 3,000 miles.

In severe weather, with dust or moisture it wouldn’t hurt to change it every 2,000 miles.

The same is true if you live in a very cold climate, as my friend, Terri with “My Own Ezine” does...she lives in Wisconsin, USA!

They have terrible weather up there...I say “up” because I’m at the bottom of the US!
<http://www.myownezine.com>

Unless you use Amsoil Synthetic Oil.

Check it out at: <http://www.chucksgreenoil.com>

With this oil you will only have to change it about 25,000 miles...or about once a year.

You only need to change the oil filter in the middle; 6 months or 12,500 miles.

Synthetic oil is good for the environment...let's save it, we still have to live here.

An oil change is several dollars cheaper than an engine!

Check the transmission fluid!

After you've checked the engine oil, with the engine cold, crank it and let it warm up...or go to the store and get a soft drink. ☺

But before you turn the engine off, check the transmission fluid.

The engine and transmission needs to be warm, or hot, to check the transmission fluid.

Also, the engine has to be running with the transmission in park.

If the fluid is just a short way (1/4") below the Full mark, don't worry about it. It's ok.

Don't overfill the transmission...you'll blow a seal: not good. ☹

Since we are getting the vehicle ready for the summer, or winter, how long has it been since you changed the fluid and filter in the transmission?

What!?! Yes, it has a filter, and that's the life of the transmission.

If your vehicle is three or four years old, I'd change it now (after you finish reading this). ☺

There is a book on "How To" for changing the transmission oil and filter. Get it at <http://www.badcaragain.com> on the ebook page.

Check the brake fluid.

Let's check the brake fluid. What color is it?

Black!?! Oh no!

We need to flush the brake system.

There will be an ebook for that also, coming soon. For now though, if the fluid is clear, but low, just add some to the master cylinder.

Check the manual to make sure what type fluid your vehicle requires...most use Dot 3.

Don't fill it to the very top, leave about a quarter inch of space for expansion.

Tires

Look at those tires!

Is the right rear tire a little bit low?

I mention the right rear mainly because if you get into the vehicle from the driver's side, when you are going to drive; you very seldom see the right rear tire.

Keep the air pressure up to vehicle specifications. It should be in your manual. If it's not, or you don't have a manual, 32 pounds of pressure is safe.

Now, if your favorite vehicle is a ¾ Ton or larger you might better put 40-50 psi in them.

You want to keep the air pressure up to *par* (what ever that is).

If it gets too low, the tire will wear on both edges. Not good!

Buy another one and put the one that's wearing in the truck for a spare. That is the only place you can put it to keep it from wearing any more. ☺

There is an article that tells you how to change a tire, if you have the need--such as a flat! ☹

Check with me on that, too.

***** TIPS TO THINK ABOUT! *****

How often do you use your parking brake?

You need to use it more often than that!

It's not just an "emergency" brake! ☺

Using it when you park keeps the parking brake cables free from corrosion and sticking.

If the cables aren't free to travel in their little housings they will keep pressure on the rear brakes, causing them to wear out too soon.

Definitely not good. Causes extra heat...more problems. ☹

Plus, it uses more fuel to go up the highway (or down, which ever direction you are traveling) with the brakes partially holding.

Do the front brakes squeal like a pig?

Don't panic. It's only the metal backing plate on the brake pads slapping against the metal housing.

There is an article on the website that explains this.

<http://www.badcaragain.com>

If it has too much, it will wear in the middle. This is not good, either!

You can put shims behind them or get some brake silicon to put on the spots where the metal rubs.

After you get to the store and get out of the car, do you smell oil burning? ☹

Check the valve cover gaskets.

Sometime the valve cover gasket will leak oil onto the hot exhaust manifold.

As this burns off it puts out a "scary" smell! ☹

Have you notice oil spots on your carport?

Are the oil spots coming from the front of the engine, or the rear?

If you have oil leaking from the front or rear of the engine, you probably have a seal out.

Sometimes the PCV valve will clog up and quit doing its job.

Then the gases by-pass the rings and go into the crankcase, where the oil is.

It also dilutes the oil, which is not good for the bearings.

This is a Positive Crankcase Ventilation valve. It lets the engine "breathe," ahaa. ☺

This causes pressure in the crankcase to build up, like a balloon when you put air to it, and pushes out the weakest points...usually the front or rear seals, or the valve cover gaskets.

After you replace the valve cover gaskets, or the seals, replace the PCV valve.

If the leak isn't too large, try changing the PCV valve first!

This just might stop the oil from leaking and save you a lot of \$\$\$.

When you are driving alone, and by yourself, do you ever get a smell of *rotten eggs*?

Sometimes the catalytic converter starts getting out of shape (inside) and causes the rotten egg smell.

Take it to the muffler shop...you don't want to pollute the air, do you?

Anyway, it'll save fuel, and a lot of other problems down the road, by getting the catalytic converter replaced before you start messing up the environment.

And you'll feel so good about yourself!

Do you notice white smoke coming out of the exhaust pipe when you crank your vehicle after it has been sitting for awhile?

I hope not.

That's an indication that you have a blown head gasket, or possibly a cracked head, or block!

There is not a book out on that, yet! Not from me anyway...maybe later, if you really want one.

Battery

Don't mess with that white stuff on top of the battery cable ends!

Or, on the side of the battery if you have the side-post.

That's battery corrosion!

It will burn your skin if it gets on you.

If it gets into a small cut on your thumb, it will burn, and burn, and keep on burning!

It will eat most anything, like Mikey.

So keep it off of the paint on your vehicle, and your clothes!

You can wash it from your skin with water...Vinegar is better, though.

You can clean that stuff off the battery with a paper towel, but be sure to discard it properly.

Then pour vinegar over the post and cable ends and wash them with clear water...you don't have to buy a 'bottle' of water, just use water from the garden hose, if you have a garden hose.

Note: If you don't have any vinegar, you can use Baking Soda to clean the battery with...yeah, the same stuff you use to make biscuits with...you do make biscuits, don't you?

Just be sure the little caps are on the battery.

You don't want to get trash inside the cells...or vinegar, or baking soda, or anything but plain clear h2o. ☺

After you have the ends cleaned and tight you can use wheel-bearing grease to protect them.

Just smear a light layer all over the ends and on top of the post.

You can do the same thing with the batteries that have the cable ends on the side.

If your battery goes completely down and won't make the lights burn or the radio play, you will have to clean the post and charge the battery.

You can buy an inexpensive battery charger from the parts stores. It's called a "slow" or "trickle" charger...you can leave it hooked up all day, or, all night.

If all this happens, and you get the battery charged up to where it will crank the engine, and you notice that you can't play your favorite music on the radio, what happened?

If you have a 90+ model vehicle, you may have an anti-theft radio.

When someone steals your radio and breaks the battery connection from it, the radio goes into a *disabled* mode.

It will be useless, and they will have to give their customer his money back. ☺

If you disconnect the battery it will do the same thing.

You can re-program it though. There should be a code in the owner's manual.

If there is no code in the manual, or no manual, you can get the code from the dealership.

One more tip on saving fuel, brakes, and other monies:

When you know you are going to stop, or turn off the road, take your foot off the gas pedal, slow down, just let it coast. ☺

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Contact Tommy at: <mailto:badcaragain@txucom.net> or visit <http://www.badcaragain.com> Thanks!

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This ebook tells you all about how you can have a new looking vehicle for a very long time, with less expense to you. It also helps you with knowing how to ‘talk’ with the repair shop and dealership technicians instead of just ‘listening’ to them.

Now that you have read **this** little book and got all the links off, **give it to several people**, they need it. They will thank you, too! And so will I! ☺

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