

# Easy Ways to Improve Gas Mileage



**Whether you're running errands around town or taking a family vacation, through-the-roof gas prices can be painful on the pocketbook.** Fortunately, you don't have to buy a hybrid vehicle to benefit from improved fuel economy. Instead, just follow these quick and easy steps.

## Fill up at the right time.

Save money by refueling late at night or early in the morning—when the ground temperature is colder, the gas is denser, which means you get more for your gallon. And the time of week matters too—you'll fork over more cash to fill up on the weekends.

## Plan your route.

Think through where you're going before you hit the road to minimize backtracking, making

extra trips, or getting lost. To save even more fuel, tackle all your errands in one outing.

## Slow down.

Driving 55 miles per hour on the highway rather than 70 miles per hour can yield 20 percent more miles per gallon—and won't get you to your destination that much later than if you were driving faster. Cutting down on aggressive driving helps too—speeding, rapid acceleration, and quick braking all waste gas. To ensure a smoother ride, use cruise control on the highway.

## Turn off the engine.

Idling wastes gas, so turn off your vehicle if you plan to stop for more than 30 seconds—contrary to popular belief, restarting isn't bad for the engine.

## Get regular tune-ups.

Regular vehicle maintenance—including checking air filters, spark plugs, fluid levels,

tire pressure, and vehicle alignment—is worth the time and money because it keeps your vehicle running its best and can improve mileage by approximately 4 percent.

## Use the right type.

Purchase the grade of oil recommended by your car's manufacturer to improve mileage by as much as 2 percent. And pass on high-octane gas in favor of regular fuel—high-octane fuel won't improve the performance of most cars.

## Carry less.

Do you really need to haul miscellaneous sports equipment around in the trunk? An extra 100 pounds in your vehicle can reduce fuel efficiency by up to 2 percent, so stash the golf clubs in the garage unless you're headed to the course.

**Learn more about ways to improve fuel economy from the U.S. Department of Energy at [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov).**



## Finding Fido

**There are no bones about it: When your pets are outside enjoying the warm weather with you, there's an increased risk that they'll get loose.**

Luckily, innovative pet-tracking devices make it easier and faster to find and identify your precious pooch or kitty, so you can enjoy a happy reunion with your favorite furry friend. Check out these nifty options:

» **Digital tags.** It's hard to squeeze essential info on standard dog tags. But with digital tags, you make it easier for others to contact you if they find your pet. For example, the Dog-e-Tag from eTags LLC allows you to program as much as 400 characters of text in as many as five languages, so you can include your e-mail address, neighbors' contact information, your pet's health info, and anything else you deem relevant.

The durable tag is **waterproof, shock resistant, and available in six vibrant hues.** To order, visit [www.dog-e-tag.com](http://www.dog-e-tag.com).

» **Microchip implants.** Smaller than a grain of rice, electronic microchip implants contain an embedded code. When your pet is found and taken to an animal shelter, a handheld scanner reads this identification number, which is linked to your contact information. Microchip implants are inserted under the skin between the shoulders via a fast, easy, and painless injection. And they're an **inexpensive solution that lasts at least 25 years.** Contact your veterinarian to inquire about microchip implant services.

» **Global positioning systems.** Just as GPS devices help you navigate the road, they can help you navigate your pet's location too. Once you snap these devices onto Fido's collar, you can program a virtual fence in the system—if your pet exits the fence's boundaries, an alarm sounds to grab your attention. And the systems allow you to **track pets' locations whenever you please.** Try Global Pet Finder, [www.globalpetfinder.com](http://www.globalpetfinder.com); RoamEO, [www.roameoforpets.com](http://www.roameoforpets.com); or Zoombak, [www.zoombak.com](http://www.zoombak.com).