

Using Your Ears to Save Money and Time

One of the greatest ways to save money on vehicle repair is to catch problems early, and listening is a great way to do it. For many drivers, catching problems early means bringing their vehicles in for regular oil change services and having inspections, or even pre-trip inspections, before taking a spring road trip somewhere. And that's great! However, the time it takes between services can be when unforeseeable problems begin. Lots of bumps, potholes, weather, surprises and just plain bad luck can happen in the months and months between. But you don't have to wait for a breakdown OR wait until your next visit to detect problems.

A little detective work on your part can go a long way to saving a lot of money when it comes to repairs. All you really have to do is listen. Use your ears! Here's how:

First, turn down your radio or pull out those earbuds attaching you to your mp3 player. Besides not being very safe, having loud music prevents

you from hearing the sounds your vehicle makes. Many drivers are very in-tune with their vehicles, and the sounds are familiar. Other drivers always have so much music or other noise that they never listen. But the sounds your vehicle makes can tell you a lot, whether you are mechanically inclined or not.

For starters, just listen. With music off, heater or air conditioning off, kids quiet (good luck with that), find someplace that you can safely slow down and listen. Drive along and pay attention, you might find ominous noises you've never heard. Roll down the windows and take a close listen. Clickings, scrapings, flappings, chuggings, whistlings, groans, creaks and squeals... all sorts of things can be heard once you pop the "bubble" of the metal isolation chambers our vehicles sometimes become.

If you hear something that doesn't sound right, swing by and we can have a listen too. It may be that a particular sound is normal. But if it's not,

why wait for the part or system that is making it to fail. It's almost always more expensive to wait for a part to fail than it is to fix it before it's gone completely bad. If nothing else, save the cost and inconvenience of having to have your vehicle towed.

So take a moment every now and then to have a listen, use your ears to save yourself some money and some time.



Driving Green Makes You FEEL Good



Spring is the season synonymous with green, and green has become synonymous with things good for our planet Earth. Given these relationships, spring is the perfect time to think about how we, with

our vehicles, impact our planet. Whether you worry about global warming or not, nobody likes nasty, smog-filled air, and you can follow a few simple steps to make sure you're doing your part to help keep the air clean, the water clear, and your vehicle trouble free and fuel efficient. Here are a few tips to help you be green and feel good about how you drive.

- **Tire inflation:** Tires should be inflated to the pressure recommended for your vehicle; this information is often printed inside the doorframe or in your owner's manual. For every three pounds a tire is below recommended pressure, fuel economy is reduced by about one percent. Tires can drop one pound of pressure per month, and changes in temperature affect pressure too. Check your pressure at least once a month, and check it before you go on any long trips or load your vehicle with a heavy load. If you like, you can stop by and we can check it for you too.

- **Fuel economy:** Gas prices are going up, so keeping an eye on fuel economy is important. If you notice your vehicle is using more fuel than it should, something isn't working properly. Have your engine, fuel system and even your brakes checked, as all of these can have a huge effect on fuel economy.

- **It's the little things:** Minor repairs can increase your fuel economy. Let us check for worn spark plugs, dragging brakes, and low transmission fluid. In addition, have your wheels aligned and tires rotated if it's been a while, and replace the air filter if needed.

- **Change the oil:** Not only does changing the oil help your car, truck or SUV last longer, doing it regularly helps with fuel economy. Plus, in the name of being green, we'll make sure the waste oil is handled properly.

- **Check engine light:** Have your vehicle's emission control system checked periodically if you've seen the check engine light come on. Even if it goes off most of the time, it's still trying to tell you something is not working properly. Often what triggers that light is also impacting the quality of emissions coming from the tailpipe, which means

it's probably affecting air and even water quality.

- **Develop green driving habits:** You can make simple changes to your driving habits that will make you greener. One way is to do as many tasks and errands as you can each time you leave the house rather than make lots of smaller trips. As you do this, think about the route you take through town and do things in the most efficient way; this reduces the amount of time you drive. Also, while you are driving, try to stick to the speed limit, and reduce the stop and go driving (which produces more emissions) by setting a reasonable pace. While you are at it, extend your spring-cleaning to the trunk, foot wells, and truck bed to reduce the amount of weight your vehicle is carrying around. An extra 100 pounds of cargo can impact your fuel economy by about 1 percent.

All of these things, done together, can really add up to a lot of reduced fuel and emissions. This not only helps the environment, it helps your wallet too. So why not spend a moment this spring to consider what you can do to help keep the air clean and the water clear all year.

Test Your Green IQ!



1. Approximately how long does it take for a glass bottle to break down at a landfill?

- a. 25 years
- b. One year
- c. 1,000 years
- d. One million years

2. How old is the EPA?

- a. 35 years
- b. 50 years
- c. 60 years
- d. 25 years

3. How can scrap tires help save the environment?

- a. Better education
- b. Drive fewer miles
- c. Burn as fuel
- d. Make lots of swings

4. What's the number one trash item found on beaches?

- a. Seaweed
- b. Cigarette filters
- c. Plastic bottles
- d. Food bags

Green IQ Answers

1: d. One million years.

One million years. It takes approximately one million years for a glass bottle to break down at a landfill. In the U.S. today, 34% of all glass containers are recycled.

2: a. 35 years

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) marked its 35th anniversary on December 2, 2005. From regulating auto emissions to banning the use of DDT; from cleaning up toxic waste to protecting the ozone layer; from increasing recycling to revitalizing inner-city brownfields, EPA's achievements have resulted in

cleaner air, purer water, and better protected land.

3: c. Burn as fuel

In 2003, 130 million scrap tires were used as fuel, up from 25.9 million in 1991. Tires can be used as fuel either in shredded form - known as tire derived fuel (TDF) - or whole, depending on the type of combustion device. Scrap tires are typically used as a supplement to traditional fuels such as coal or wood.

4: b. Cigarette filters

From 1996 to 2000, international marine debris collectors found over 6 million cigarette filters

on beaches, followed by over 3 million food bags. Where do all the cigarette filters come from? Much of the blame must be placed on careless beachgoers, but they are not the only source. Smokers who flick cigarette filters out of a car window, stamp cigarettes out on a sidewalk, or dump out their car ashtrays in a parking lot contribute to the marine debris problem.

