

BASIC TIPS AND HINTS FOR LOOKING AFTER YOUR CAR

Far too many times we are confronted with something going wrong with the car and usually it's because we ignore symptoms or just do not adopt a common sense approach to driving and maintaining our wheels.

Here are some common sense hints and tips for looking after your car and enjoying motoring without the stress.

Let the car cool down – before you check the radiator always allow the car to cool down; uncapping the radiator can lead to scalding from the hot steam or overflowing of the radiator itself both of which can be very dangerous to you personally.

Keep a disposable camera in the glove box – accidents are a fact of motoring life, it is very rare for a driver to go through a lifetime of motoring without encountering the odd mishap but in the event of an accident being able to take a photographic record of the scene is extremely helpful; make sure you also keep pen and paper too.

Seat covers and dash mats – help to keep your car interior in good shape and maintain the value of your vehicle so make sure they are fitted and are in good condition themselves.

Check your **tire pressure** - under-inflated **tires** are bad news because they reduce your fuel economy, increase the wear on your tires and affect your **vehicle handling**; always make sure you have the correct tire pressure which you will find in your driver manual or usually by the driver's door on a label from the manufacturer.

Battery terminals – need to be cleaned if there is a build-up of acid residue but you don't need anything fancier than plain, black tea and a cloth (but wear protective gloves). An alternative **sodium bicarbonate of soda** solution – use a teaspoon to one quart of water and apply to the terminals and clean the contacts as well. Keeping the connection clean will help fire up your engine and maintain battery life.

Air conditioning not keeping you cool – if you have the **air conditioner** on but it is not keeping the temperature as cool as you think it should be then you probably need the unit re-gassing; this can be done inexpensively at the garage but you should make sure you don't use the unit until it is refreshed as this simply burns gas or runs down the battery for no cause.

If you hear a screeching sound when you brake – then you need your **brakes** checked and even more seriously, if you hear a grinding sound then immediately take the car into the garage as this is more than simple brake pads needing to be replaced but actually the metal of the brake disks itself that is grinding against the wheel.

These are just a few hints and tips to keeping your car in top condition but you should also make sure you regularly service your vehicle. A regular service will go a long way

to keeping your vehicle in excellent shape as well as reduce your overall motoring costs; even a fouled spark plug can reduce your fuel economy by as much as 35% or in other words, a third of the gas you pump is just wasted. It's not just the running costs you can save money on – a car that has been well maintained will also maintain its resale value and protect your investment in it.

Source : <http://www.hicow.com/air-conditioner/motoring/vehicle-handling-1.html>