

Auto Tune-Ups: DIY: What You Need and What You Need to Remember When Tuning Your Auto



Considering doing your auto's tune-up yourself? Then you'll need to have the right tools and materials in hand. The following are some of the basic tools and auto parts you'll need when tuning your own vehicle:

Spark Plugs: the number of spark plugs you should have in stock depends on the number of engine cylinders you have. Remember, it's one spark plug per engine cylinder.

A Replacement Air Filter: since you're going to be checking and possibly even cleaning your air filter, it's always handy to have a replacement part with you in case your filter is damaged beyond repair.

A Spark Plug Tool: for easier and safer spark plug removal

Torque Wrench: the torque wrench should come in handy when you're removing various auto parts under your hood. (spark plug sometimes included)

A Spark Plug Gapping Tool: If you're planning on replacing any of your spark plugs then you need to find the right amount of space for proper airflow. This is the main purpose of this handy tool.

Fuel Filter: as you can already gather from its name, this handy auto part helps clean your fuel from impurities. It also prevents debris from settling into your gas tank and destroying your engine. This auto part needs to be replaced every few years or every 30,000 to 40,000 miles—all depending on what your owner's manual specifies.

Clean Cloth or Cloths: there's no better way to soak up spills than with a nice, clean cloth.

Brush or Brushes: small brushes will help you clean even the most hard-to-reach places between your auto's numerous components.

PCV Inlet Filter or PCV Filter: this auto part is found in your air cleaner assembly, near your air filter. Replace immensely dirty or clogged filters to improve your engine's performance.

Masking Tape and Marking Pens: use these tools to label the parts you take out for easier reassembly.

Compressed Air: you can get compressed air from a can or an air compressor.

Other auto parts you may need:

Replacement Distributor Cap: if your distributor cap is damaged or cracked then you need to replace this cap as soon as possible.

Ignition Wires or Cables: exposed to extreme heat, these high-voltage current carriers are usually prone to damage and meltdowns. Replace busted wires ASAP to prevent stray current from destroying the auto parts under your hood.

Distributor Ignition Rotor: in most cases, replacing the distributor also requires you to replace the rotor found with it. If you're planning on getting a tune-up kit, make sure your kit contains this vital part.

ON AUTO TUNE-UP KITS:

There are some companies out there that offer great tune-up kits. Most kits feature basic replacement parts included in the package. This allows you to save money and lets you

purchase only some parts separately. But before purchasing just any tune-up kit, do check different kits and then compare prices and items to find the best deal for you.

FREQUENCY OF AUTO-TUNE-UPS FOR OLDER VEHICLES

If your vehicle was manufactured in 1980 or earlier, you may need to conduct tune-ups more often. You may also have to conduct additional checks depending on the type of parts installed in your vehicle.

WHAT YOU NEED TO CONSIDER BEFORE A DIY AUTO TUNE-UP

Do you have enough time to conduct an auto tune-up yourself? Even the most well-maintained autos require at least an hour of your time for comprehensive checks and cleaning. If your vehicle is in poor condition, then expect it to eat up at least four to five hours of your time. If your vehicle also carries a relatively large engine (if you have a truck, an SUV or a van), then expect to have more parts and spark plugs to check compared to a regular compact car. If you don't have time for the DIY tune-up, then I highly suggest letting the pros handle this car maintenance tip.

Are you in good health? Auto tune-ups will require a lot of stamina, since you're basically going to be examining even the smallest parts and probably even lifting heavy loads as you replace auto components. Are you fit enough for this job?

Have you considered having a garage conduct the tune-up for you? Some garages may save you money because of their special deals on tune-ups. Look around your area to find a reputable garage that would tune your auto at a good price. This can be the cost-effective solution you're looking for. Compute the costs of buying the materials vs. having someone else buy the materials for you. Leaving this job to the pros allows you to save not only time but also money. If, however, there's much to be done with your vehicle, then expect the prices to be a little steeper than what you initially expected.

Do you have the right information to conduct an auto tune-up? While most owner manuals state exactly what type of air filters, ignition wires and spark plugs you need for auto tune-ups, if you find that your owner's manual doesn't contain enough information then you may want to purchase manuals from Hayne's or Chilton's or any other manual from your trusted auto parts store for the right assistance.

I advise you to think about these factors first before embarking on a DIY tune-up.

Source: <http://automechanics.wordpress.com/2008/06/28/auto-tune-ups-diy-what-you-need-and-what-you-need-to-remember-when-tuning-your-auto/>