

Story from GRIFFIN-FORD

## DIY car care you shouldn't skip

Lynn Walford for Griffin Ford Published 5:27 p.m. ET March 2, 2017 | Updated 5:58 p.m. ET March 2, 2017

*Easy things you should be doing to keep your car healthy*



(Photo: Getty Images/iStockphoto)

Caring for your car is easier than ever, while not caring for your car can be catastrophic. Monthly checks, along with keeping a maintenance schedule and cleaning your vehicle can avoid disasters and keep your car running longer.

### Visual Inspections & Maintenance

Taking a monthly visual check of your car is very important, according to Jill Trotta, director of the Automotive Group at RepairPal. Once a month, open the hood of the car and look at the fluid levels – the brake fluid, coolant, power steering fluid and window washer fluid. If you don't know what to check or where to the fill fluid, ask your mechanic to show you what to do. It only takes a few minutes.

After inspecting under the hood, walk around your car and look for fluid leaks. If you see any kind of liquid, you should immediately take your car to a mechanic.

"Noticing and fixing a minor leak can save hundreds and hundreds of dollars in repair bills later," says Trotta.

"All the information on how to maintain your car including fluid specifications and scheduled maintenance can be found in your owner's manual," says John Latner, ASE certified technician at ACDelco, supplier of automotive parts. He says changing the oil is the most important maintenance step you can do to keep your car running smooth and for a longer life.

If you decide to change the oil and replace the filter yourself, most auto parts stores now ask for your vehicle identification number (VIN) to be sure that you get the correct part, says Latner. You should keep records of your maintenance by keeping your receipts.

### Tires

Keeping your tires inflated properly and checking tread wear is very important for performance, gas mileage and even your transmission.

"If you have tires with different wear on different sides of the car and there is more than an eighth of an inch difference in circumference it could adversely affect your transmission," says Wayne Colonna, president of Automatic Transmission Service Group.

You can measure tire tread wear by placing a tread wear gauge between the grooves of the tire. A tire pressure gauge connected to the tire valve will show the tire pressure. The correct tire pressure appears inside the door, in your owner's manual or on the tire itself. If you have mixed brands of tires on your car, you should check the tires with a tire stagger gauge for circumference and width. If there is a major difference, you should have the tires checked by a tire retailer or mechanic, says Colonna.

### Battery & Fuel

To make sure that your car continues to start, you should maintain the battery. You want to make sure that the terminals are clean and the battery is connected properly to the post and it is not vibrating because it can shorten the life of the battery, says Latner.

Using the correct octane gas is vital to car performance. Colonna says to save money some drivers buy lower octane fuel and then wind up taking their cars to mechanics. The fuel specifications are stated in the owner's manual.

### Clean Inside & Out

Keeping your car clean is essential. When you do your monthly inspection, you should clean off bird droppings, bugs, berries or other debris from the outside of the car because they may eat into the paint, says Trotta.

The methods for cleaning the exterior and interior of your car are explained in your owner's manual, says Latner. He warns owners to be careful and not store or spill liquids inside your car. It's a good idea to remove those half-full coffee cups and open soda cans.

"There are now many electronic components that should not get wet. For example, a spilled drink on an electronic gear shifter could cause electrical damage," says Latner.

Clearing away and throwing out the parking tickets from parking lots or other loose items on the dash is also a good idea. "Sometimes people leave a

parking ticket on the dash and it gets sucked into the ventilation system and gets caught in the motor," says Trotta, "A two-dollar parking receipt could damage the motor and cost a couple of thousand of dollars to repair."

Following these simple, regular maintenance steps can save you money and headaches, and keep your car on the road longer.

Stop by one of the Griffin Auto Group dealerships today to see how you can rest assured you're caring for your car.

Visit us at [griffinchevy.com](http://griffinchevy.com) (<http://griffinchevy.com>), [griffinford.com](http://griffinford.com) (<http://griffinford.com>) or [griffinshubchryslerjeepdodge.com](http://griffinshubchryslerjeepdodge.com) (<http://griffinshubchryslerjeepdodge.com>).

- Griffin Chevrolet, 11100 W. Metro Blvd, Milwaukee [414-434-5000](tel:414-434-5000) (tel:414-434-5000)
- Griffin Ford, 1940 E. Main Street, Waukesha [262-542-5781](tel:262-542-5781) (tel:262-542-5781)
- Griffin's Hub Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge RAM, 5700 S. 27th Street, Milwaukee [414-325-3333](tel:414-325-3333) (tel:414-325-3333)

**Members of the editorial and news staff of the USA Today Network were not involved in the creation of this content.**

Read or Share this story: <https://www.jsonline.com/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/03/02/diy-car-care-you-shouldnt-skip/98656484/>

### **MORE STORIES FROM GRIFFIN-FORD (/TOPIC/NONE/)**



[\(/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/03/02/car-features-keep-everyone-happy-long-road-trip/98655256/\)](https://www.jsonline.com/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/03/02/car-features-keep-everyone-happy-long-road-trip/98655256/)

**[Car features that keep everyone happy on a long road trip \(/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/03/02/car-features-keep-everyone-happy-long-road-trip/98655256/\)](https://www.jsonline.com/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/03/02/car-features-keep-everyone-happy-long-road-trip/98655256/)**

*Story from GRIFFIN-FORD*



[\(/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/02/06/autonomous-cars-what-does-the-future-look-like/97544742/\)](https://www.jsonline.com/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/02/06/autonomous-cars-what-does-the-future-look-like/97544742/)

**[Autonomous cars: What does the future look like? \(/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/02/06/autonomous-cars-what-does-the-future-look-like/97544742/\)](https://www.jsonline.com/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/02/06/autonomous-cars-what-does-the-future-look-like/97544742/)**

*Story from GRIFFIN-FORD*



[\(/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/03/02/kids-cars-safety-features-you-shouldnt-forget/98653590/\)](https://www.jsonline.com/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/03/02/kids-cars-safety-features-you-shouldnt-forget/98653590/)

**[Kids in cars: Safety features you shouldn't forget \(/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/03/02/kids-cars-safety-features-you-shouldnt-forget/98653590/\)](https://www.jsonline.com/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/03/02/kids-cars-safety-features-you-shouldnt-forget/98653590/)**

*Story from GRIFFIN-FORD*



[\(/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/02/06/this-years-model-or-next/97546594/\)](https://www.jsonline.com/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/02/06/this-years-model-or-next/97546594/)

**[This year's model, or next? 4 things to know before you buy a new car \(/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/02/06/this-years-model-or-next/97546594/\)](https://www.jsonline.com/story/sponsor-story/griffin-ford/2017/02/06/this-years-model-or-next/97546594/)**

*Story from GRIFFIN-FORD*