

Lessen the Pain at the Pumps by Sandy Scherschligt

We are all feeling the pain every time we pull into the gas station these days. So here's a no-gimmicks approach to saving money on your gas consumption. Follow these tips and you'll be getting more bang for your gas bucks. The first point may seem obvious, but many people simply don't take the time to comparison shop for gas.

Buy it for less!

Here's a great link to check out who has the lowest gas price in your area (or wherever you happen to be). This site will give you up to-the-minute gas prices by zip code. [Click here to check this out!](#) I went to the site today and it showed a 12 cents/gallon difference between the lowest price offered and the highest. Now that's a huge difference.

Also, if your grocery store offers you discounted gas prices for shopping there, by all means take advantage of these offers. These offers can save you 3 to 15 cents a gallon; with today's roller coaster pricing, it will feel good you to do something proactive about high gas prices.

Driving Habits

Your driving habits also make a huge difference in the gas mileage you get. One very simple way to get better gas mileage is to attempt to decrease rapid acceleration and deceleration. This tip alone can save you as much as 13% in fuel efficiency. Driving the speed limit at 55 mph rather than pushing it to 65mpg will also increase your gas mileage by up to 15% (not to mention saving you money on speeding tickets).

Also, don't let your engine idle or you could be wasting between a half or even a full gallon of gas per hour. Driving with the windows down, using car-top carriers, bike racks, ski racks and even sun roofs all create wind resistance and reduce your gas mileage. If you are using these, consider removing them until you need them. However, now that we've told you to keep the windows up, it's important to know that using your auto air conditioning can lower your fuel economy by 10-20%. So on the highway, we recommend you keep the windows up for less wind resistance, but in stop-and-go traffic it's more efficient to shut off the air and keep the windows down. Lastly, lighten your load. Don't carry around lots of excessive weight in your trunk. Your car loses about one mile per gallon in fuel economy for every extra 250 pounds you haul. (That doesn't give you the excuse to leave your slightly overweight Aunt Claudia home next outing).

Car Maintenance

You can save up to \$100 a year on gas by simply keeping your engine tuned and your tires properly inflated. A well-tuned engine burns less gas (as much as 3-8% less). If you keep your

tires under-inflated, you can lower your fuel economy by as much as 2% for every missing pound of pressure as well as losing tire tread. Make sure you check your tires regularly for alignment and balance. Only use snow tires when necessary as deep tread and big tires use up more fuel.

At the Pump

Be sure and use the lowest grade of gasoline allowable based on the owner's manual specifications. Most cars don't require premium gasoline and no one needs premium gas prices. The best time to buy gas is early in the morning or late night. The gas you pump is densest during these times. Buying at the right time of day will allow you to get more for your money since gas is measured by volume, not fuel concentration. Also, don't top off the gas tank. Not only is it dangerous but you often spill precious gas that you are paying top dollar for. Tighten down the gas cap and if it doesn't fit properly replace it to prevent your expensive gas evaporating into thin air.

Special Incentive Credit Cards

Take the sting out at the pump with a Special Gas Incentive credit card, [click here](#).

Take a Hike

And last but not least, try driving less! Share a ride, combine lots of little trips into one well planned trip, walk more, ride your bike, be creative here and the results could be even greater than just saved money.

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