

The Easy, Breezy, Beautiful Guide to Stretching Fuel Dollars

Who isn't feeling squeezed at the gas pump these days?

Whether it's from the price of gas or the increase in food prices caused by escalating fuel costs, there seems little relief in sight. The question becomes, how can you get more bang for your gasoline buck?

There are volumes of material on fuel saving tips (we know because we looked). But, who has time to sort through it all? You have places to go and people to see! Right? Fortunately, MTM has sifted through the books, articles and Internet Links to provide you with this quick glance tip sheet to stretch your fuel dollars farther.

Before You Drive- According to the Automotive Association of America <<http://www.ouraaa.com/index.html>>, your driving habits and vehicle maintenance have the greatest affect on how many miles per gallon (MPG) your car will get. So, to increase your MPG, start with fresh spark plugs, air filters, and an oil change. The investment will pay off in the long run.

Properly Inflate Your Tires- According to the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency, by keeping your tires inflated to the proper pressure, you can improve your MPG by 3.3%.



ing your car off and restarting. Congested traffic uses more gas due to the stop, idle, start pattern. Constant movement, (even at slow speeds) uses less gas than stop and start travel. If possible, avoid peak traffic hours. Also, avoid the drive through restaurant window. Park and walk inside. Service might just be faster inside and stretching your legs will feel nice too.

Travel Light- The heavier your car is, the more fuel it uses. Remove any unnecessary weight from the trunk. Leave the safety equipment there, but take out the sand bag from last winter's snowstorm, the sports equipment from two months ago...you get the picture.

Use the Cruise- Turn on cruise control when safe and appropriate. Remember to turn it off going up long or steep hills.

Keep Cool- Put your car in neutral and your foot on the brake when waiting at a long red light or when stopped for a passing train. This allows the transmission to cool and consumes less fuel than keeping the car in drive gear.

Close Windows- Air drag caused by open windows and sunroofs can reduce your MPG by up to 10%, especially on the highway.

Shutting Down- Decrease engine load the next time you start up by turning off any power accessories when you have finished driving. This includes turning off the air conditioner, heater, heated seats, heated steering wheel, or CD player.

These simple tips will increase your MPG and increase the time between visits to the gas pump. We recommend that you apply as many of these tips as possible to get the most from a gallon of gold, err that is, gas.



Once in Motion, Think Smooth- Smooth roads, smooth starts, smooth stops. All three help use less fuel, leaving more in the tank than burned up through the engine. A gravel road can reduce your MPG by 30% (ouch!). Quick acceleration and braking can reduce your MPG up to 33% (wham!). Incorporating smooth stops into your driving habits requires keeping a safe travel distance (Tailgaters must be in a hurry to get back to the pump for more fuel.)

Use Other Tools- Shop online, bank online, pay bills online, and order by phone. Give the car a rest when possible. Avoid Idling- Your car gets 0 MPG while idling. If "idle hands are the devils workshop," idling your car can't be much better for your MPG. Idling for 30 - 60 seconds uses more fuel than turn-