

Sensible Driving can Cut your Fuel Bill by 30%

Vidyalaxmi shares some useful tips to improve your car's fuel economy and save precious money

Finally, the price of diesel is also up by ₹5. And there is widespread speculation that petrol prices may go up again soon. The scenario is definitely unnerving for car owners, as the government is trying to pass on the rise in oil prices to consumers to rein in the ballooning fiscal deficit.

Obviously, you can't do much about the prices of fuel, but what you can do is to try to bring your fuel bill down. Irrespective of whether your car runs on petrol or diesel or CNG or LPG, it makes sense to keep your fuel bill under check. Here are some basic tips which will be useful to improve the fuel economy of your car.

MAINTAIN RIGHT TYRE PRESSURE

This is one of the most ignored aspects, say experts. If the tyre is low on pressure, the engine has to work harder to maintain the speed and the balance, which burns more fuel.

"A car owner can save 5-10% on his fuel expenses if the tyre pressure is maintained at the required levels," says Banwari Lal Sharma, AVP-marketing, CarWale Automotive Exchange. Most technicians keep the air pressure at 30 PSI, but refer to the car manual to see the recommended pressure for you car tyre. Ideally, an individual should check the tyre pressure once a week.

DRIVING TECHNIQUE AND SPEED

Many car drivers have a tendency to ride the clutch. Sometimes it is a technical glitch espe-

cially if one upgrades from a bike to a car. But some drivers tend to change gears too frequently, which also put constant pressure on the clutch. Ideally you should press the clutch only to change gears, or to bring the car to a complete halt. Clutch riding and frequent shifting of gears eat into your car's fuel consumption.

"Aggressive driving, speeding, rapid acceleration and braking can lower your mileage by 30% on highways and around 20% on city roads," says Rupesh Rele, an auto expert. The exact speed limit to maintain a good fuel economy may vary from model to model. Drive in a gear that corresponds to the speed you're at. This means you shouldn't be revving the bolts off the engine, or crawling along in top gear. For a petrol car, you should follow the gear pattern of 10-15 kms for first gear, 15-25 for second, 25-35 for third, 35-45 for fourth and 50 plus for the 5th gear. As you speed up, you should reach the highest gear to optimise the fuel consumption.

ENGINE CHECK

Don't let the engine tachometer run beyond 2,500 RPM, especially in case of petrol cars. That is the maximum load an engine should take while driving on the road. "Often, drivers monitor the

speed of the car but don't observe the tachometer of the engine. Letting it go beyond 3,000 RPM is a big no-no for any car," adds Rupesh Rele.

A car owner should also undertake regular engine check-ups. A poorly maintained engine can consume up to 50% more fuel than an engine in good condition. Also, check the engine oil at regular intervals as prescribed in the car manual. The viscosity of the engine oil reduces because of non-servicing of the car. This will cause friction, damage the engine and lead to a bad fuel economy as well.

KEEP THE CAR LIGHT

Ditch the extra scrap in the boot, keep out the baby seat if you don't require, clean the car once a while to shed off any extra scrap, this way you can save up to 2% on your fuel average. "Often, when we change cars, certain spare parts or accessories are put by the service men in the boot of the car. The car driver, being unaware, just lets the extra weight hang in the car boot, which increases the weight of the car," adds Banwari Lal.

Simply put, the car's engine gives power to move the vehicle forward. In case of any excess weight, the engine has to work harder to maintain the speed of the car. In the process, it consumes more fuel. The effect is more in case of smaller cars, the experts say.

Also, a loaded roof rack can increase fuel consumption by as much as 5% on highways. Even an empty roof rack can increase consumption by



1%. If the carrier is detachable, it should be removed when not in use, suggest experts.

Light up your office for better productivity

Natural lighting is best so have as many windows as possible

Good feng shui in and around your office space facilitates harmony and makes a lot of difference to productivity. Harmony at the workplace diffuses bitchiness, reduces politicking and minimises gossip—things that can cause much unhappiness. Good feng shui in your personal space helps you achieve recognition.

Beware of hidden storage

While you tidy up your desk, it is easy to simply shove unwanted documents and papers untidily into drawers and cabinets where they cannot be seen. Although this improves the outward



feng shui corner

Monika Chawla

appearance of your desk, this can build up into stagnant energy that affects your success at work over time. Do not neglect your drawers and

filing cabinets. Make it a point to organise them every now and then. Throw away what you don't need.

Avoid sharp edges

Make sure you don't have sharp edges that point directly towards where you sit. Sharp edges are poison arrows that send harmful

shar chi or killing breath towards you. The killing energy sent your way will not just hamper your career, but it can also affect your health.

Work with good lighting

A well-designed office is one where lighting is well-designed. Natural lighting is best so have as many win-

dows as possible. Half windows are better than full-length windows for areas where work desks are located. Full-length windows bring in too much yang energy, making it difficult to concentrate and creates a feeling of vulnerability. Basement offices with few or no windows are seldom auspicious. To supplement natural light, best is to use full spectrum lighting, which simulates natural daylight bringing better visibility, health and efficiency.

Another way to characterise light is white versus yellow light. White light is better for offices, because the overly cosy ambience created by yellow light slows down productivity.

The author is a feng shui consultant, director of Spirit n Soukcraft, tarot card reader, numerologist, palmist and a holistic healer. Email mikkachawla@gmail.com

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