



# SAVING GAS AND IMPROVING MILEAGE

## What can I do to save gas?

- **Walk, bike, take a bus, or carpool when possible.** Use your car only when necessary. Public transportation authorities often have carpooling information as well as transit services. If you own more than one vehicle, drive the one that gets the best gas mileage whenever possible.
- **Combine errands into one trip.** Consolidate trips to destinations that are near one another. Once you arrive, park and walk between destinations. Save errands for one afternoon and plan your trip so you don't retrace your route. You not only save gas this way, but reduce wear and tear on your car.
- **Drive your car wisely and maintain it properly.** The way you drive and take care of your car can make a big difference in your gas mileage.

## What Can I do to get better gas mileage?

You can greatly improve your mileage by having your car serviced regularly and by driving wisely. Any of these eight points can help improve your mileage.

- **Go easy on the brakes and gas pedal.** Avoid "jackrabbit" starts by accelerating gradually whenever possible. Also, anticipate stops to avoid sudden braking.
- **Avoid long idles.** Turn off the engine if you anticipate a lengthy wait. Instead of idling at a drive-up window, park the car and go in. Idling burns more gas than restarting the engine. Also, limit car warm-ups during the winter.
- **Avoid carrying unneeded items in the trunk.** Extra weight decreases gas mileage. Also, reduce drag by placing items inside the car or trunk rather than on roof racks.
- **Avoid high speeds.** You can improve your gas mileage about 15 percent by driving at 55 mph instead of 65 mph.
- **Use your air conditioning only when necessary.** Roll down the windows or open the air vents to keep your car comfortable on not so hot days.
- **Use overdrive.** If your car is equipped with overdrive gearing (on 5-speed manual transmissions and 4-speed

automatic transmissions), be sure to make use of the overdrive gear as soon as your speed is high enough. If you have a manual transmission, the lower the shift speed, the better fuel economy. Your owner's manual will give you further information.

- **Keep tires properly inflated and aligned.** Periodic wheel alignments and keeping tires inflated to the maximum recommended pressure can improve your gas mileage.
- **Get regular engine tune-ups and car maintenance checks.** Tune-ups improve performance as well as gas mileage. Check your owner's manual for recommended maintenance schedules. By following the manufacturer's recommendations, you should avoid fuel economy problems due to worn spark plugs, dragging brakes, low transmission fluid, or the transmission not going into high gear.

## What should I consider when buying a new car?

- **Understand your needs and buy accordingly.** Get only the options you really need. Optional equipment that adds weight to your car can decrease your gas mileage (especially heavy options such as four-wheel drive). Automatic transmissions generally degrade fuel economy. Larger engines and higher horse-power typically result in lower gas mileage. If you need the additional power and torque, be aware your gas mileage will suffer during all types of driving.
- **Check the gas mileage ratings of similar vehicles.** Buy a fuel efficient model in the size category that meets your needs. The Federal Gas Mileage Guide, issued annually and free of charge at all auto dealerships, compares gas mileage of similar models.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Mobile Sources