

7 steps to saving fuel

Alison On Money

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In my quest to save money, here are seven painless ways to cut fuel costs courtesy of 4Refuel Ltd., a Langley B.C., company that manages fuel supplies for business and knows a thing or two about saving a litre here and there.

1 Kill the idle: Not only is it illegal in some places but more than three minutes of idling can shorten engine life and excessive idling can add as much as 50 per cent to your fuel costs.

Idle idiots also shorten the life of their engine oil by 75 per cent. During the depths of winter's chill, it's tempting to warm up before you get in, but cars today have fast and efficient heaters.

2 No jack rabbit starts: Jack rabbit starts use 40 per cent more fuel and increase emissions by 400 per cent. What's more they save less than three minutes over 60 minutes of driving.

3 Pussy foot the accelerator: Cars travelling at 120 km/hour versus 100 km/hour use 20 per cent more fuel.

4 Put your car on a diet: Eliminate superfluous items — golf clubs, in-

laws, etc. Even a couple hundred extra pounds adds stress to the engine and decreases gas mileage.

5 Keep your engine purring: Tune-ups really do increase gas mileage and extend the life of your engine.

6 Check your tire pressure: Correct tire pressure saves gas — as much as two weeks worth a year — while improving car handling and braking and decreasing tire wear.

7 Take the ankle express: I'm amazed at how many people get in their cars to drive from store to store at the power centre malls rather than walk a few hundred metres. A little ankle express, for kids and adults, improves gas mileage and magically shrinks waists.

You have no influence over oil prices but it's within your power to have the same effect as a decline at the pump with a little effort.

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