

Keep good fuel habits and save money

PERSONAL BAILOUT TRANSPORTATION

TIPS ON RIDING OUT THE RECESSION

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Are you still wondering where all your money is going?

Here's something to think about: according to the Canadian Automobile Association, the average Canadian spends \$9,000 a year driving their car.

After loans and insurance, fuel costs make up most of car owners' expenses, even for those of you driving an old clunker that requires frequent repairs.

Short of suggesting you park your car and walk to work — God forbid — there are several ways you can improve your fuel efficiency and cut back on the disposable income you're currently pouring into your gas tank.

Here are five handy tips:

1) Stop idling

According to 4refuel.com, a Canadian organization dedicated to fuel management solutions, excessive idling can add 50 per cent to fuel costs and shorten the life of engine oil by 75 per cent.

2) Don't floor it

Hard acceleration and speeding are two of the biggest and most common causes of fuel waste.

According to studies, going it off the line not only raises your struggling engine's fuel consumption by about 40 per cent, it increases the toxic fumes coming out of your tailpipe by a staggering 400 per cent.

If you're on the 401, we suggest you keep your speedometer under 120 km/h. Aside from the obvious

Lose weight and stop wasting gas

FUEL from B1

safety and legal concerns that come with speeding, you'll also use about 20 per cent less fuel.

3) Lose weight

Shed pounds either from your body, your trunk or your car. Excessive weight makes your engine chug harder from the gas tank.

4) Keep cool, the old-fashioned way

According to consumer reports, using your air conditioner while driving around town can decrease your fuel efficiency by about 10 per cent.

So turn it off and roll down your windows when you're motoring around. That said, if you're zipping along on the highway, opening windows can add wind resistance to your car, produce drag and cause your engine to sip more octane.

In that case, it's recommended you close your windows and use the air conditioner instead. Of course, difficult as it may be, if you can survive with your windows shut and the air conditioner off, then you'll get the best mileage possible.

5) Check those tires

Keeping your tires pumped up to the right pressure year-round can save you lots of fuel. It will also improve your braking and will keep your tires from wearing out so quickly.

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