

EASY RIDING

The All-In-One Car Guide

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Introduction

All of us own cars, but how many of us know how to maintain them perfectly? Come to that, what do you look for when you are buying a new or used car? Do you even know what to look for? I want to try to make sure you don't get a raw deal when it comes to buying and maintaining a car. This e-book tells you all you need to know about buying, driving and maintaining a car – from the initial purchase, to buying spare parts, to driving in different weather conditions – we have it all.

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1. Tire Care Guide: The Basics You Need To Know

If you thought you could compromise on the quality of care you devote towards your car tires, you need to think again. You can never expect your vehicle to perform with maximum efficiency if the tires are suffering. So start taking proper care of your tires, and take into consideration all aspects of tires that need to be taken care of.

Following these helpful tips about basic tire care will keep your tires in good condition, thereby ensuring greater performance and the driving safety of your vehicle. Well-maintained tires also provide greater gas mileage for your vehicle.

- The tires accumulate a great amount of dirt and grime, and thus require regular washing and periodic waxing. So stop being lazy and start washing and cleaning your car tires frequently!
- You should plan a thorough washing and cleaning of your tires with soap and water followed by waxing at least once a month. This helps to dislodge any kind of foreign particles that might be sticking between the treads, because these often lead to punctures.
- Periodic tire washing gives you the opportunity to inspect your tires for uneven wear as well as to check the air pressure in each of them.
- You must regularly rotate your car tires. Rotation is the process of exchanging the position of the tires by bringing the rear tires in front and *vice versa*. Also, the tires should be swapped between the two sides. Each tire of your car exhibits different wear patterns, and this kind of dual rotation helps to analyze the wear capacity of each tire in different positions. Rotation facilitates more uniform wear on each tire, so in this way you can increase the tread life of your tires by as much as 20%. Getting your tires rotated between every 5000 and 8000 miles should help you achieve this.
- Make sure that the alignment of all the four tires of your vehicle is done in the proper manner. Correct alignment of the tires indicates that all the wheels of your car are pointed in the optimum direction relative to the road and to each other. If your tires are improperly aligned it will cause a strain to the tires – which in turn will start to wear out excessively, especially at their tread edges. This can affect the fuel efficiency of your car.
- Get your tires checked at least once a year as to whether they are properly balanced and each of the wheels is spinning with the weights of all the four tires distributed equally. Otherwise you can expect your vehicle to wobble from side to side or hop up and down abnormally.
- You must maintain a proper inflation pressure in all the four tires of your vehicle. In most cases the car owner's manual or a sticker inside the car gives you a proper idea about the

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optimum pressure you should maintain to get the best performance out of your vehicle.

- Always check the tire pressure when the tires are cold.
- By avoiding over-inflating or under-inflating your car tires, you can extend the tread life of your tires, improve driving safety and save fuel.
- Get your tires inspected regularly to detect any kind of puncture that needs immediate repair. It is very dangerous to drive on punctured tires, or tires that are losing air without your knowledge. Also, driving on punctured tires can damage your tires to such an extent that after some time they cannot be repaired at all.

So safeguard the health of your car tires as well as you can. This will contribute towards a smoother, safer and hassle-free driving experience for you.

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2. Car Parts Buying Tips

The most common car parts that need to be changed or replaced from time to time when not in the best of the conditions or damaged due to accidents include headlights, bumpers, rear-view mirrors, car body parts, radiators, wheels, rim covers, a/c compressors, air intake parts, brakes and brake pads, clutches, seat belts, exhausts, wiper blades, gears, spark plugs, steering, suspension and shock absorbers, and so on.

Nowadays specialized car parts are the rising craze amongst motor lovers. These car parts enhance the overall appeal and functionality of your car. So you can shop for nitrous systems to lower emission levels, high-performance super silicone wiper blades, smoke headlight covers for stylish protection of expensive headlights, force wheels, and many more. You are truly spoiled for choices while buying car parts!

Here are a few car parts buying tips that might just make things a bit simpler for you while you go shopping for the necessary car parts.

- There are innumerable online auto-parts stores as well as car parts stores in your neighborhood selling different kinds of auto parts. Select a genuine and reliable car parts store that sells genuine and guaranteed original products.
- It is best to buy your car parts from online car parts and accessories stores. These online car parts showrooms offer a wide range of the latest and coolest car parts and accessories at attractive prices. So you can find some of the best deals online while shopping for your car parts.
- Also you must be very careful about buying your car parts from the numerous chain auto-parts stores! There are several car parts retailers who tend to overcharge on your overall car parts receipt/bill. So you must have substantial knowledge about the pricing of the car parts that you want to buy. Check up the Internet and various auto-parts magazines for the latest price lists. Write down the prices and bring the chit along when you come to shop for the car parts. Make sure that the register displays scanned price which is same as the posted price. Don't forget to check your receipt/bill before leaving the store.
- Used car parts are no doubt cheaper but brand new car parts are the safest bet. So it's better that you buy new car parts for your car that will provide hassle-free performance and also comes with certified warranty. However if you are lucky enough then second hand car parts might give you good results too.

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3. Gas Saving Tips You Should Know

Apart from well maintaining your car you need to be economical in spending fuel. A slight change in your motoring habits will save both your time and money.

Here are some of the tips that will help you in reducing the amount of gas you are using:

- *Drive steadily.* Your fuel consumption will increase if you stop and drive. Maintain a steady speed, do not slow down or speed up unnecessarily. It's better to drive on a highway, as it will eat up less fuel.
- *Avoid rash and aggressive driving.* This will increase the mileage by 33%. So drive within the speed limit. Driving sensibly is not only safe for you but also it will save your money on gas.
- *Avoid starting and stopping your engine uselessly.* Idling your engine for one minute uses the gas amount equivalent the amount that is used when the engine is restarted.
- *Try to use the roads that are straight, short and safe.* Corners and curves on the road will consume more gas.
- *Don't give much time to your engine for warming up.* During cold mornings 30 to 40 seconds is enough.
- *Reduce the usage of air conditioner.* When the air conditioner is on the gas consumption is more.
- *Avoid driving on rough roads.* 30% of your gas mileage is wasted out of dirt, dust and gravels.
- *It is better not to keep heavy items on your car while driving.* Excess weight will reduce the mileage of your vehicle. Remember a carrier or a roof rack adds extra weight to your vehicle. So install them only when it is absolutely necessary.
- *Try to drive your car on the highest gear possible.* Driving at a fast rate on low gear will consume up to 45% more fuel.
- *Keep your tires properly inflated.* Under-inflated tires need more energy to roll; therefore it will reduce your mileage. Properly inflated tires are long lasting. Try to use large diameter tire for rear wheels.

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- *Use a recommended grade of "energy conserving" motor oil.* Make sure the oil you are using contain friction-reducing additives.
- *You must know that you will be charged according to the volume of the gasoline.* So try to buy the gasoline in the early morning or late evening when the gasoline is densest.
- *Do not fill the gas tank to the top.* This will result in spilling over the oil out of tank while you are driving.
- *Make sure you replace the clogged air filters.* This will improve your gas mileage by at least 10%.
- *When you are driving on highways close your windows and use vents to get outside air.* Open windows will cause wind drag reducing your mileage up to 10%.
- *Avoid driving in busy hours to get rid of traffic congestion.* If possible while going out for a long distance take the advantage of carpooling.

Drive carefully following these simple rules to improve your fuel economy. These tips will not only save your money on automobile gas but also protect your car from wear and tear.

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4. How To Make Your Car More Fuel-Efficient

With the cost charges of gasoline (petrol/diesel) the first thing that crosses your mind is how much fuel efficiency does your car have. You will always prefer that your vehicle provides maximum mileage but consumes lesser amount of precious fuel. You obviously don't want to run out of fuel quite frequently and add up to the monthly car expenses.

So if you want to save money and enjoy your car-rides whole heartedly without worrying too much about fuel expenses then you must make your car more fuel-efficient. To get the most out of your fuel tanks without burning a hole in your pockets you can adopt the following budget-friendly tips on how to make your car more fuel-efficient:

In the very first place the best deal will be to purchase cars that are fuel-efficient giving you greater mileage with lesser fuel consumption. Some of the most popular and famous fuel-efficient cars in the market include the Volkswagens (Golf, Jetta and Beetle) the Honda civics, the Toyota Echo, the Toyota Corolla, the Chevrolet Prizm, the Suzuki Swift, the Mitsubishi Mirage, the hybrid cars launched by Honda that run on both gas and electricity and many more.

To get more miles per gallon of fuel both while driving in the city or on the highway you've got to regularly check your car tuning. Keep an eye on the spark plug and if there is any problem get it tuned immediately so that no additional fuel gets wasted.

Installing fuel injector cleaners into the gas tank enhances fuel efficiency of your car ensuring better running of the vehicle.

Change the car oil frequently after every three months or after driving every 3000 miles whichever is applicable first. This helps to run your car engine smoothly and efficiently providing greater mileage.

Engine belts become worn out due to continuous usage, so they can develop cracks. If this is the condition of your car's engine belts then get them replaced or repaired immediately. Damaged engine belts greatly affect the engine's performance and thus enhance fuel consumption.

Keeping your car's engine on the idle mode for a longer time leads to excessive fuel consumption. So when you are stuck up in traffic jam or want to grab something from your local stores turn off the engine completely. Avoid idling the engine while driving as much as you can to save fuel.

Try to avoid driving your car at very high speeds. You must maintain driving within the prescribed speed limits somewhere within 55 miles per hour that will help you save on a lot of fuel thus rendering your car more fuel-efficient.

While driving in the city amidst heavy traffic you must try and avoid sudden jerky starts and braking of your car. This causes the burning of a huge amount of gas. It's best to slow down gradually or stop completely in order to save fuel.

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5. Importance Of Regular Brake Inspections

Can you think of your car without brakes? Don't you think a car without brake is equal to a man without his/her limbs? A complete and thorough inspection of your brakes is very important as well maintained brakes will enhance your safety when you are driving on highways.

If you hear a metal scraping sound in your vehicle check your brakes thoroughly. The brakes of your car can have different types of common problems. It can have improper rotor surface, its caliper mounting bolts may loose down, the car can have excessive drag during acceleration, it may pull to one side or the car's spring may weaken. If your car needs servicing the brakes will show low pad indicators. Therefore whenever you have an irregular feel while driving have your brakes inspected.

Brakes become weak due to many reasons. Due to overuse the brakes are hardened and they lose their power to grab or stop the rotation of the brake drum or rotor. Again if your brakes are soaked up with oil or grease they tend to become weak. If you have worn or glazed brake pads you will get grinding noises from the brakes. Sometimes it may happen that your emergency brakes are frozen due to rust. If such things occur the brakes will not release when they are supposed to. As a result you will feel a drag during acceleration.

It is very important to inspect your car's brake system at least once a year. Your brake inspection should include a check on the brake lines and the dash warning lights. After completing the inspection go for a test drive to find out whether there are any other potential problems with your brakes. You also need to change the brake pad if you hear a screeching sound on applying the brakes. If you observe any fluid leakage or uneven pad wear know that you have to change the disk brake calipers.

While you are inspecting your brakes always go for the dynamic brake testing system. The visual inspection of the brakes is not enough for your car. Brake imbalance can only be detected under dynamic brake testing. This is quicker method where you can have the right detection of your brakes. This system gives instant results and provides more information. In dynamic testing system you can have a check to the actual braking force and verify the proper brake balance.

Never underestimate the braking system of your car. A regular inspection of your car will lessen your hassles in near future and you will be safe to drive your cars on highways.

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6. Protect Your Car From Theft

It is true that once your precious car is out of your hand it becomes very difficult to track down your vehicle. Presently vehicle theft has become the nation's number one property crime. More than half a million vehicles wind up in the hands of thieves every year. Though there are law enforcement personnel for investigating and tracking down lost cars, sometimes they have very little to go on if they do not have any suspects or eyewitness. Following certain simple guidelines will prevent car theft more often than not.

Common Sense Approach:

These are some common and simple suggestions that you should follow to protect your car.

- Always keep your car locked.
- Take out the keys of your car from ignition when leaving your seat.
- Close all windows of your car when leaving.
- Park your car in well-lit areas.
- Avoid parking in secluded or isolated places.
- Don't keep a spare set of keys inside the car.
- Don't leave your car engine running when you visit places like ATMs, banks, gas stations or small stores.
- When you are parking your car, always use emergency brakes.
- If your car will remain unattended for a long time, remove the ignition fuse, coil wire and distributor rotor.

Audible or visible device:

There are some common anti-theft devices available to attach on your vehicle.

- Audible alarm system
- Steering wheel locks
- Tire locks
- Steering column collar
- Theft deterrent decals

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- Wheel locks
- VIN etching on windows

Vehicle immobilizer:

These are some devices that will prevent thieves from bypassing your ignition and “hotwiring” your car. Some common vehicle immobilizers you can use are:

- Smart key with a computer chip
- Fuse cut-off
- Kill switch
- Starter, ignition and fuel disabler

Tracking Systems:

This is a high tech device, which you can hide in your car. This device emits signal to the police when a car is reported stolen. This system is very effective in tracing a stolen car.

Apart from taking these preventive measures, also consider certain other things. Always be alert and take precautions while driving. When you are getting into your car, look around and be alert about the surroundings. Check your back seat before starting your car. Make sure your locked doors are still locked when you return. Always keep your cell phone with you and know the emergency numbers.

When you are buying a new car make sure you are buying from a genuine dealer. Be cautious about ads in newspapers and other publications. If you are buying a used car, ensure that the car is not stolen by researching its Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).

Vehicle crime has become a big business. Car crime rings make huge profits at your expense. Protecting your car from theft is your moral responsibility, as well as being in your own interest.

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7. Winter Driving Tips

Put behind the sweet and not-so-sweet memories of your summer driving escapades. Start revamping your car and driving skills to drive safely in the extreme and severe, often-hazardous conditions that you usually encounter during winter. You have to reconsider certain driving techniques and rules specifically while driving in snow, blizzard or wet conditions that you will come across so often when the chill sets in.

You can have a look at the following useful winter driving tips that might help you drive smoothly and safely throughout winter.

- While driving in winter you must always be alert of weather conditions. Listen carefully to all kinds of radio alerts and weather updates while driving. You might get caught up in a blinding snow-storm/blizzard if you are inattentive too often.
- During winter the surrounding visibility on the road is quite poor, especially when it snows heavily or the sun remains hidden behind the clouds. In such dark and gloomy conditions you'll need to drive with your car's entire lighting system turned fully on. This helps to enhance the visibility on the road substantially. It also makes your car conspicuous amidst several other cars and vehicles on the road, which is especially important while driving on a highway/freeway.
- During winter the roads become extremely slippery. Your car can skid dangerously if you try to accelerate carelessly. So never drive at a high speed in winter, avoid jerky steering while braking or accelerating to prevent skidding. Always drive slowly within controllable, comfortable and safe posted speed limits.
- However if you think your vehicle is hydroplaning/skidding dangerously then the best option would be either to step on the clutch or shift to neutral gear avoiding braking suddenly. Go in for threshold braking instead. Do not accelerate in panic and stay calm! Only after gaining full control should you try to steer the vehicle in the direction you want it to go.
- Check the braking system of your car prior to winter. Make sure that the brakes are working smoothly without jamming. Remember you will need them quite frequently while driving in winter to stay in control of your wheels!
- Under normal driving conditions it is advised that you follow the two-second rule that helps you leave adequate space between your car and the vehicle in front of you for safety reasons. But in winter it would be wise enough to double/triple the two-second rule!
- Bring down the speed to not more than a crawl while negotiating a sharp bend or corner on slippery roads in winter.

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- Beware of black ice! These are road patches that appear black and shiny and are ideal areas where your car wheels tend to lose grip quite easily. Drive slowly and carefully with your foot on the clutch or in neutral gear along with squeeze braking over these patches, and avoid accelerating at all costs.
- Never drive when you are fatigued in winter.
- In the car always stock up essential food, first aid, water, warm clothing, emergency lights, torches, blankets, shovel, towropes, chains, etc. to handle emergency situations.
- If you're struck or stranded in a blizzard, or the traffic just seems to have come to standstill due to accumulation of layers of snow, do not panic. It's better that you remain inside your car. Call for help if the cell phone signal is strong enough. You can draw attention to your vehicle by holding out colored flares, emergency flashers, flags, etc.
- In order to handle winter conditions with greater confidence behind the steering wheel, find one of the short advanced driving courses that teach emergency winter driving skills. Get yourself enrolled before winter arrives.

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8. Drive Safely On Wet Roads

If Driving is a passion for you, then you just love to test your endurance against driving at top speed in varied terrains and conditions. But whatever be the situation you must assure your safety first when driving especially while driving on wet roads and terrains.

The rainy season or post-snow melt poses a great danger for drivers. The roads and other driving terrains become exceedingly wet and slippery. So if you are driving a bit unmindfully on a wet road you can expect to land up in a big trouble that might prove to be fatal! Wet roads provide great dangers for both expert as well as amateur drivers. So you must keep in mind some important facts that will guarantee your safety while driving on wet roads.

- The problems and difficulties faced by drivers driving on wet roads are technically referred to as hydroplaning.
- You must always bear this fact in mind that driving in wet weather conditions is completely different from your driving escapades on any bright sunny day! You have to be on full alert and maneuver your car cautiously on a wet and slippery road.
- Roads tend to be wet and very slippery especially after a spell of heavy rain or when accumulated snow in winter starts to melt. The water on the roads are mixed with dirt, grime and leaking oil from cars and other vehicles. This turns out to be an ideal condition for hydroplaning.
- The thin layer of water between the car tires and the road generates a barrier that in turn diminishes the grip between the tires and the road surface. So the vehicle starts gliding over the water layer on the road surface.

To avoid your car skidding you have to adopt certain techniques and car maintenance tips that will ensure that you are in perfect control while driving on wet roads. They are as follows:

- Never drive at high speeds on a wet road. Driving at a lower velocity provides you with greater stability and adhesive friction.
- You must avoid abrupt jerky movements while braking, accelerating or turning around a corner.
- Another safety guideline that you must follow while traversing on wet roads is to maintain adequate distance between the cars in front of you. So if by any chance you need to brake suddenly then you can have sufficient distance between your car and the one in front of you before coming to a halt.
- Skidding on wet roads leads to innumerable road accidents each year. In most occasions it

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has been reported that poor quality tires or poorly maintained tires were responsible in addition to the driver's carelessness. So you have got to invest in top quality tires that are specifically adapted to both dry as well as wet and slippery conditions. You have to maintain your tires regularly checking on their inflation, whether they have become bald and worn out, the air pressures, etc. so that your tires perform with maximum efficiency on wet roads providing you with greater control and confidence.

- Also avoid all sorts of physical and mental distractions while driving on wet roads. You have to stay extremely alert in case you lose control!
- However if you start to lose control over the wheels then just stay calm and don't panic! First lightly apply the brakes steering in the direction of the skid, push down the clutch and let the car slow down on its own.

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9. Shopping For A Car? Tips To Get Started

It takes quite a bit of effort to shop for that ideal car that you really want to possess. You've got to do a bit of homework prior to your car-shopping spree so that buying a new car can be more satisfying and a hassle-free experience.

The following tips can help you buy the right car of your choice:

- When you think you want to go shopping for a car then you must first work out your budget. Depending on the model of the car you must arrange for proper finances and funds. There are innumerable variety of car models that you can select from according to your taste and budget.
- To take care of your monetary hitches while buying a car there are numerous banks and financial institutions offering car loans at attractive interest rates.
- Also make prior arrangements to get your car insured. Compare insurance rates/coverage and avail discounts and competitive offers on deductibles.
- Make sure that you have a proper driving license. If the current license is waiting for renewal get that renewed right away! Shopping for a car would be absolutely futile without a certified driving license. Well if you can get hold of an IADC international driver license then you can drive your brand new beauty in any part of the globe!
- When you set your mind on buying a particular car it's better that you gain a detailed knowledge about each and every aspect of that model on your own. You must not let yourself be ruled by the semi-true/false information offered by desperate car dealers or salespersons.
- There are several highly acclaimed car magazines and journals featuring varied information about different types of cars. You will surely find related information about the car you want to buy! The Internet has made your car-shopping task a lot easier. How about clicking on the numerous car-related websites?
- You must list out the exact features and attributes that you are looking for in your car such as fuel-efficiency, looks, utility/functionality and other such aspects before embarking on the shopping.
- Decide whether you want to go in for a brand new car or a used car taking into consideration both their advantages and disadvantages.
- Go in for a test drive. You can test drive several cars at a time thereby you can compare their performance and efficiency. Comparison of prices is also essential, as you will always want to buy the right car at the fairest price. You also need to look for genuine and certified car

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dealers/salespersons who will not take you for a ride.

- While shopping for a car negotiating its price with the car dealers can be quite a bit stifling! But you have to indulge in it whatsoever if you want to strike a better car buying deal with the over ambitious salespersons trying to make profits. Always start the price negotiations from the invoice price and not the MSRP (Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price)!
- Check out the warranties on your new/used car before buying. There is a standard warranty and an extended warranty term on the purchase of most new cars as well as in some used cars. Get these terms straight with the car dealers.
- Beware of dealership add- ons, after-market add-ons and finance department add-ons! These are simple profit making techniques by desperate car dealers, financiers and such people that can cost you heavily if you are not careful.

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10. Buying A Used Car? Things You Should Know!

You had always dreamt of owning your own car and moving around the town in style! But at the moment you are short on finances to buy a brand new car. So the next best alternative that comes to your mind is purchasing a second-hand car or the so-called 'used car'.

However before buying a used car you have to carefully analyze a few aspects that will assure you a complete hassle-free driving experience in the near future. A brand new car comes with a warranty tag along with the satisfaction that it has been unscathed and untouched by any reckless driver before. But when you are buying a used car you are at risk! Well you don't have to lose hope. If you can devote some of your precious time in a bit of careful research and analysis regarding how and where to buy reliable used cars at a fair price, you will surely reap great benefits in the long run.

Here are a few important things that you should keep in mind before buying a used car from a car dealer or an individual:

First and foremost you have to chalk out your budget. You've got to decide as to how much you can shell out to purchase the car and maintain it in the long run. So you have to take into consideration various factors such as car insurance, operation and repair costs, etc.

You also have to analyze the utility of your car, that is, the car will be utilized for what purpose.

You will then have to select a car that appeals to you to the max! There are innumerable selections of used cars that are put up on sale all the time. The car dealers always try and exaggerate various aspects/features of different cars and you can get confused. You can talk to friends and relatives who are using the same car that you are eager to purchase. Ask them about the performance, mileage, repair records, safety, etc. of the car so that you can gain some knowledge prior to buying it.

Another important aspect is that you must always equip yourself with a car inspection checklist. The checklist will point out as to what are the specific areas of the car whether the interiors/exterior that you have to minutely check before purchasing the used car.

You've got to check the exterior of the old vehicle carefully, include checking over any kind of structural rust/corrosion especially in the regions of seat-belt anchorages, door locks/hinges, suspension mounting points, etc., checking over the tires, shocks, panels, and the exhaust system. Painting anomalies also need to be minutely examined that are mostly used to camouflage rust and recent repairs.

Then moving on into the inspection of the car interiors you must carefully check the entire dashboard, the housing the switches, knobs, radio, levers and wirings; seats with safety belts whose retractors and buckles are in a working condition; brake pedals and the clutch; signs of water leakage on seats and underneath carpets.

Do not forget to check underneath the hood checking over the condition of the engine, engine oil,

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and radiator leaks and coolant stains.

It is best if you can take a certified car mechanic or a car expert who will accompany you while you test drive the used vehicle. While test-driving at both low and high speeds examine the performance of the engine, gears, brakes, analyze the power of the engine, emissions etc. Try and stretch the duration of your test-drive as long as you are not completely satisfied.

All the paperwork including all legalities and documentation with respect to purchasing a used car must be totally clarified to avoid any kind of anxiety or tension. So if you are buying the car from a dealer make sure that the dealer is genuine. Registered/licensed car dealers usually check over all the details regarding the car's previous ownership and documents that includes registration details, tax details, insurance policies applicable, invoice, warranties, car manuals, etc.

If you are buying the car off your friend or any relative make sure that you follow the change of ownership procedures in totality. Check out if you are running into a stolen car or a car attached with undischarged debts.

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11. Going For A Test Drive?

Ready to buy your dream car? It is time go for a test drive. Before you purchase a car make sure it is THE car you always wanted to drive.

A test drive is not 'just another drive'. A proper test drive ensures that you are buying the perfect car. So before going out for a test drive you need to have certain preparation.

The very first thing that you need to check is the appearance of the car. Do you like the exterior? How is the finish? See how comfortable you are in the driver's seat. The car must be in a proper condition and must have a smooth operation. Take a close look at the instruments and controls. Then comes the visibility factor. Ease of entry/exit, for front and rear should be checked. Are you getting enough seat comfort? Get in and out of the car repeatedly and check the comfort & convenience features. Is there enough legroom? How big and comfortable is the storage space inside?

Once you are happy with these features move on to test the engine performance. Start the engine and see whether the warnings lights are going out properly. Find out whether the tachometer is working properly. Check out the cars oil pressure indicator and volt/amp meter. The oil pressure indicator and volt/amp meter should be at 4000 rpm. The engine and the clutch must not have any noise. Restart the engine more than once to find out whether there is any problem. Block the exhaust pipe with a clipboard to find out whether there is any smoke or any deposit. You should also check the cars spare parts, brakes, jack, tools and also its fuel gauge. Also check out whether the heater, AC and lights are working properly.

When you have finished checking make an actual drive test. You need to negotiate the driving time with the dealer. The longer the better. And make sure that YOU are the one to be at the steering. You can choose a familiar route but we suggest you to try different road surfaces and gauge how the car is reacting.

You have certain things to check on the road;

- While driving the car make sure that you have a comfortable ride.
- The car should track straight.
- The lower gears must revolve smoothly to redline.
- The turbo and overdrive must engage and disengage properly.
- The clutch should have a smooth operation
- When brakes are applied the car should remain straight.
- The steering must be comfortable.
- The engine temperature should be ok when the car is in speed.
- There should be no noise or vibration when the car is accelerating, braking or shifting.
- Tracks and brakes must be straight when hands are off the steering wheel.
- The wheel must not wobble.

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- The car should not have any unusual smoke or noise.

After you complete your test drive you must prepare a checklist. The checklist will give you a complete evaluation of your test drive. Write comments for each of the tools you have tested.

While going out for a test drive it is advisable to take friend along with you who has sound knowledge about cars to help you in your detection. A companion will also enable you to have an enjoyable and pleasurable ride.

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12. How To Wash And Wax Your Hot Wheels

Your car is a prized possession that is very close to your heart. As you take care of anything that you cherish dearly, you will also not want to compromise on maintaining your automotive beauty in the best way possible! Regular cleaning of the car includes thorough washing and waxing of the entire car body and also the wheels.

You just cannot evade that not-so-comfortable task of cleaning your car wheels. Wheels are an important part of your car and they need to be washed and taken care of in the same way as you would take care of the exterior and interior of your car body.

Here are a few useful guidelines that will help you go about the job of washing and waxing your 'hot wheels!'

Washing The Car Body:

- For washing your car body you must always use detergents that are specifically made for automotive use only. If you use ordinary and harsh dish washing liquids/soaps for your car wash then the wax polish on the car body imparting the glossy finish gets damaged. These car detergents/shampoos are pH balanced containing car polish enhancers and water-soluble wax to retain the glossy wax finish of your car body and keeping it squeaky clean!
- While washing/waxing your car you must always keep the vehicle in the shade, so that the paint surface is absolutely cool.
- It's better to use a plastic bucket while washing your car than a metal one, in case the bucket collides with the car surface your car paint won't chip off and cause you heartbreak!
- Wash your car with water at room temperature and never with warm/hot water. This will ruin the shiny wax coating on your car paint leading to quicker body rot.
- Try and use a smaller quantity of car detergent than recommended to retain the wax polish for a longer time. A concentrated soap solution will strip off the wax polish more each time you wash your car with it.
- To avoid damaging and scratching the glossy finish and wax layer on your car body always use soft 100% cotton towels/cloths, car-washing mitts, soft sponges, etc. for cleaning and drying your car. Avoid using hard brushes and cloths while car washing.
- Before you start washing you've got to wet the entire car from top to bottom. For this purpose you can use a pistol grip hose nozzle and gently spray from the top to the rear ends of the car.

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- While cleaning your car divide the process into several phases. Wet the top hood first, clean it and then rinse off the soap thoroughly. Next, wash off another section/part such as the trunk in the same manner, followed by the front section and bonnet, and move down thus wetting, washing and rinsing each section of the car at a time. In this way the soap and water won't dry out if you wait to rinse off the whole car at the end! Dried soap and water damages the wax coating greatly.
- Another useful practice for preventing scratches and swirls on your car paint is to use two separate car washing mitts or towels – one for cleaning the sides and panels that accumulates great amounts of dirt, and another for the roof, hood and trunk regions that remain relatively clean.
- For removing highly acidic bird droppings, the best option is to spot clean the area with Seltzer water. Do not rub the area too hard or wash with scouring detergents that will surely ruin your paint.
- You must dry your car as soon as possible post-washing. You must use 100% clean and dry cotton towels or synthetic chamois first to blot up all the water from all surfaces. Then use another set of dry towels/chamois to blot up any trace of water.

Washing The Car Wheels:

- You must clean and wash your wheels only when they are cool. First thoroughly wet the wheels and rinse them down with jets of water to dislodge dirt and grime. Then spray a single wheel with a good tire cleaning detergent such as Zymol. Work up the lather and clean thoroughly only with a soft-bristled brush through every nook and crevice of the tire, followed by thorough rinsing with plenty of water to remove even the last particle of dirt. Repeat for all wheels.
- Do not allow soap and water to dry on the wheels.

Waxing The Car Body And Wheels:

- To wax your car surface and your car wheels you must use a high quality non-abrasive wax coat. Keep your car away from direct sunlight during the waxing process. Using the wax applicator, apply wax to one panel of the car at a time and to one wheel at a time. Wait for a few minutes. Then wipe the surface of the car and the wheels separately first with a clean terry cloth in one direction followed by a second wipe with a polishing cloth in the opposite direction to bring out that glamorous shine.
- Last but not the least, you must always maintain separate sets of towels and wipes for the car body and the car wheels.

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14. Keep Your Car Gleaming: Car Care Tips

A car is one of your most precious possessions. So to keep your car gleaming and shining and make it look "brand new" you have to take proper care of your car. Proper maintenance will save your money in the long run. If you plan to sell your car your resale value for the car will be maximized.

A car picks up lots of dirt and dust from the road, the dirt then accumulates on the body of the car. So you should rub your car everyday with a dry cloth. Make sure you clear every corner where dust can accumulate. Also clean the rims. Wash the car at least once a week. If the car is exposed to rain, it can have marks of water droplets. The marks become prominent when they are dried in sun. So wash and dry your car immediately after it is drenched in rain. Use a quality car shampoo for washing. For drying use a soft cloth preferably a terry cloth, which are very absorbent and will not leave any scratch on the body of your car.

To maintain the shiny look and the color of your car, wax it once a month. After completing the body wax apply tire wax. Look for tire wax that comes in trigger spray, as they are easy to apply. Waxing is a time consuming task. So if you do not have enough time to spare you can send your car to an auto dealer. You also need to take care of the car seats. If your seats are of leather use a leather conditioner to clean it. Also clean the dashboard, steering and accelerator of the car.

Have a garage for your car. Parking your car inside a garage will protect it from rain and cold winter.

Don't forget to send your car to the motor mechanic for servicing at least once a year. Obey the car care maintenance. Proper attention and care will keep intact the new-look of your car.

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15. Rust Proof Your Car

Are you a car freak? Are you passionate about your hot wheels? Do you want your cars to have the showroom-gleam even after years of use? Moisture, humidity and pollution – these are the worst enemies of your cars. To protect your cars from rust and corrosion, you need to take proper and regular care of your hot wheel beauties. You need to rustproof your cars for safety longevity and reselling purposes.

Rust: How it starts:

You need to understand how rust starts and what are the areas in a car that are mostly affected by rust. While driving, your car comes across numerous pebbles and stones on the road. The small pebbles will cause corrosion and expose bare metal. If the area remains unnoticed the bare metal will oxidize, form a chemical reaction and in no time rust will form. Slowly it will start affecting your car. To look for rust check the areas where the tire picks up flying stones that chip the paint. The most affected places are therefore areas around the wheels and the fenders around the tire.

How to stop Rusting:

Proper maintenance and regular care is the best way to keep rust at bay. If you detect any exposed metal, promptly use a dab of touch-up paint. Keep your car free from moisture as much as you can. Try to clean the underside of your car. Wash the underside of your car during winter to wash off road salt. Sometimes rust may form underneath the surface of your car's carpet if it gets salty water during winter. So use a good rug shampoo to remove the salt from carpet fibers. If rust has already taken place in your car before using rust proof you must remove the existing rust. Car manufacturer these days use zinc electroplating on the chassis. Zinc plating is very helpful in preventing rust. Rust proofing is also done by oil spray, leather protection, upholstery guard and also by using a good exterior car wash and shampoo.

Rust proofing not only protects a car body from rust but also it protects the electrical connections free from moisture and keeps the brake in proper condition. A rustproofing product is applied as a spray at a very high pressure that displaces the existing moisture and protects the surface of the car. There are many ways to protect your car from corrosion. Zero rust performance is a popular way where a metal phenolic called zero rust is used which controls corrosion and acts as a rust proofing barrier for your car. The zero rust proofing is effective and it offers benefits over all other rust proofing rust protection systems. Rust proofing is also done by electronic corrosion protection.

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Conclusion

So now you know how to take care of your car, whether you have just bought one or if you have had one for many decades. Take care of your car, and it should last you many more years to come.

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