

State Department Federal Credit Union

Topics of Interest

With gas prices so high, how can I get better mileage when I drive?

You can greatly improve your mileage by **having your car serviced regularly** and by driving wisely. Any of these nine 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 like when waiting at a train crossing for a train to pass. Instead of idling at a drive-up window, park the car and go in. Idling burns more gas than restarting the engine. Limit car warm-ups in winter.
- **Don't carry 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.
- **In cold weather check the oil level in your engine.** Cold weather starting does not allow the car engine to heat up quickly enough to seal the engine parts. Thus more oil is used. When a car has less than the desirable amount of oil lubricating the moving parts, it uses more energy (gasoline) to move the parts and thus you use more gas.
- **Avoid high speeds.** You can improve your gas mileage about 15 percent by driving at 60 mph rather than 70 mph.
- **Use your air conditioning only when necessary.** Roll down the windows or open the air vents to keep your car comfortable on those not-so-hot days when traveling at city speeds.
- **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 the 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.
- **Use the cruise control on your car to maintain a constant speed** if you have to commute to and from work on a highway. If you have to commute over a long distance, you will be pleasantly surprised how much gas you

can save by using the cruise control to maintain a speed just less than the speed limit allowed.

- **Keep windows closed** when traveling at highway speeds. Open windows cause air drag, reducing your mileage by 10%.