

# Auto maintenance tips: what you really need to know.



When it comes to maintaining and repairing your vehicle, how can you determine what absolutely needs to be done and what's something you can consider? While your owner's manual is a great resource, there are also a few rules of thumb you can remember. Follow these eight auto maintenance tips the next time you're at the dealership or repair shop.

1. **Don't overdo the oil changes.** Still changing your oil every 3,000 miles? If your car uses synthetic oil, the recommendation may be closer to every 5,000 to 7,500 miles or more. If your vehicle's dashboard or app displays your oil life, this is also a great measurement.
2. **Old-school tune-ups aren't needed on all vehicles.** This is especially true if you've had a car for 10 years or less. Spark plugs should last about 100,000 miles, and most cars no longer have points and rotors or traditional distributor caps that require attention.
3. **Your chassis isn't likely to need lubrication.** Unless you're driving an older model, it's highly unlikely this service is necessary. Further, adding grease where it's not needed could damage your vehicle.
4. **A fluid flush isn't always needed.** In fact, some manufacturers recommend against it. It might be best to reject the next recommendation. But be sure to see what your manual says.
5. **Filters do not need to be changed at every oil change.** Instead, ask the attendant to use compressed air to blow out debris and wait to replace the filter at your next visit.
6. **Change the transmission fluid, but only according to your owner's manual.** Service technicians may tell you it's better to change it more frequently, such as every 50,000 miles (instead of every 80,000 miles or whatever your manufacturer recommends). But doing so may be excessive, so be sure to consult your owner's manual. Some newer vehicles even have

lifetime transmission fluid, meaning it doesn't need to be changed as often as older models.

7. **Brake pads don't need to be replaced at a set mileage.** Some shops may encourage replacements at 10,000-20,000 miles, but brake wear depends on driving habits. Get them inspected, rather than replacing them prematurely.
8. **Tire rotations extend tire life more than alignments.** While alignments are important, rotating your tires every 5,000-7,500 miles can prevent uneven wear and save you money in the long run.

Staying informed about your car's maintenance needs with these auto maintenance tips can help you avoid unnecessary repairs and expenses. For more information about keeping your car in shape and your savings from taking a dent, talk to a local, independent agent about auto insurance.

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