

Dear Editor:

It doesn't matter if the car you're driving is new or old, big or small. Driving technique and proper vehicle maintenance go a long way toward protecting the environment. By following five simple steps, you can do your part by improving gas mileage, which will also save money at the pump.

- Drive green—How you drive has a lot to do with fuel economy. Avoid sudden starts and stops and go the speed limit. Jerky and aggressive driving decreases your miles per gallon (MPG) and increases wear and tear on your vehicle. Minimize unnecessary miles by combining errands in one trip.
- Get a tune-up—Regular tune-ups, maintenance and having clean air filters will help your car pollute less and burn less gas. With a proper tune-up, you can save four percent on the cost of gas and up to 40 percent by replacing a faulty oxygen sensor. Simply changing the car's air filter can improve efficiency by 10 percent.
- Lighten the load—Get the junk out of the trunk and the stuff out of your car, with the exception of emergency items such as a spare tire, flares and a first-aid kit. Extra items weigh the vehicle down and cause an increase in gas usage.
- Tire checks—Around two billion gallons of gas each year could be saved if the tires on every American's car were properly inflated. Optimal tire pressure for your vehicle is listed in the owner's manual. Tires that are not properly inflated add rolling resistance that makes the engine work harder to move the vehicle. All of this increases fuel costs as much as three to five cents per gallon, and increases the risk of engine damage.
- Gas caps and fill-ups —Approximately 17 percent of vehicles on the road have loose, damaged or missing gas caps, causing 147 million gallons of gas to vaporize every year. Topping off your gas tank when filling up your car can also release harmful vapors into the environment.

Vehicle owners who do their own maintenance should remember to recycle or properly dispose of fluids and other vehicle components, including used motor oil, tires and batteries.

For more information about making your vehicle environmentally friendly, visit [www.carcare.org](http://www.carcare.org) and check out the popular digital Car Care Guide.

Sincerely,

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Car Care Council

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