



## 12 Ways to Keep Your Car Running Another Year by DontKnowCars.com

*Resolve right now to make the car last longer and avoid costly repairs by performing a few simple maintenance steps at fill-ups. Here are a dozen proven tips from DontKnowCars.com.*

Willits, CA ([PRWEB](#)) January 1, 2010 -- A common New Year's Resolution is to keep the car trouble-free one more year. The easiest way to keep this resolution is to be proactive. [DontKnowCars.com](#) offers these simple and proven car maintenance steps:

1. Read the car's owner's manual. If there's not one in the glove box, find one online at eBay or at some used bookstores. Knowledge is power.
2. Check oil at every fill-up. Remove the dipstick and wipe it clean with a paper towel. Insert it fully and remove it again. If it's below the FILL mark, add oil. To maintain peak performance, change oil every 3,000 miles or every three months, whichever comes first. Replace the oil filter with every oil change.
3. Keep the windshield washer fluid reservoir full. When topping off, use some windshield washer fluid on a paper towel to clean off the wiper blades. In winter months, pay attention to the freezing point of the washer fluid.
4. Inspect the windshield wiper blades at every fill-up. Don't wait until rubber is worn or brittle to replace them! Wiper blades should be replaced at least once a year, and more often if smearing or chattering occurs.
5. Visually check the antifreeze/coolant level at every fill-up. Most cars have transparent reservoirs with level markings. Fill to the level marking with 50/50 solution of antifreeze and water. Caution: Don't open the radiator pressure cap to fill, especially when the engine is hot!
6. Keep tires inflated to the recommended pressure and check for tire wear at every fill-up. Buy a tire gauge, available at auto parts stores. Check the tires for cuts, bulges, and excessive tread wear. Uneven wear indicates tires are misaligned or out of balance.
7. Inspect engine belts and hoses monthly. Replace worn, glazed, or frayed belts, or have them replaced. (Vehicles with spring-loaded belt tensioners require no adjustment.) If a hose looks bad, or feels too soft or too hard, it should be replaced.
8. Check automatic transmission fluid monthly. Carefully do this while the engine is warm and running and with the parking brake on. Shift to drive, then to park. Remove the dipstick, wipe it dry, insert it, and remove it again. If needed, add the approved type of fluid; check the owner's manual for specifics. Do not overfill!
9. Check brake fluid monthly. If the level can't be checked visually, wipe dirt from the brake master cylinder reservoir lid and remove it. If it needs fluid, add the approved type, filling it to the mark on the reservoir. Caution: Do not overfill!
10. Check the power steering fluid level once a month. Simply remove the reservoir dipstick. If the level is down, add fluid and inspect the pump and hoses for leaks.



11. Check the air filter every month, located on or near the top of the engine. An owner's manual can help locate it the first time. Replace the air filter when it's dirty or as part of a tune-up.

12. Check the car's battery with every oil change. Use extreme caution when handling a battery because it can produce explosive gases. Do not smoke, create a spark, or light a match near a battery, and always wear protective glasses and gloves. Cables should be attached securely and be free of corrosion. If the battery has filler holes, add only clear, odorless distilled drinking water.

Want more? [DontKnowCars.com](http://DontKnowCars.com) offers additional car maintenance tips plus illustrated instructions on common auto repairs that car owners can do.

[DontKnowCars.com](http://DontKnowCars.com) is a free and easy-to-use website with illustrated information on all aspects of cars, car maintenance, and car repair, including resources. Dan is co-author of [Teach Yourself Visually: Car Care & Maintenance](#) and author of more than 25 other how-to books for consumers. [DontKnowCars.com](http://DontKnowCars.com) can extend the life and reduce the operating costs of any car.

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