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Green driving saves fuel, money and carbon

With petrol prices showing no signs of falling back, it's a good time to develop more fuel efficient driving habits. This is especially true if you are about to set off on your family holidays and have a long drive to your destination. And saving fuel means saving carbon emissions, so it's good for the environment too.

Here are some tips for greener, more fuel efficient driving.

Watch your speed. Driving at 50-60 mph is usually most efficient. Driving over 70mph rapidly increases your fuel consumption and your carbon emissions. It can cost up to 25% more in fuel to drive at 70mph compared with 50mph.

Try not to accelerate or brake sharply. Harsh acceleration and braking can use up to 30% more fuel. They also add to the wear and tear on your car.

Switch off the engine if you think you will be stationary for more than two minutes – for example, while you are waiting at the Hindhead traffic lights.

Drive when the traffic is lightest if you can. Avoid rush hours and the school run, as well as congested routes where the traffic is stop-start and your journey time is longer. Sometimes just a twenty minute delay can enable you to miss heavy traffic.

But don't adjust your driving time if it means you'll be in a hurry. If you're stressed you will tend to drive more erratically and less economically.

Try to combine errands so you only have to make one trip.

Arrange to car share with work colleagues or for the school run.

Remove any unnecessary items from your car. Extra weight means extra fuel consumption. If it is not inconvenient, only half full your tank for the same reason.

Remove your roof rack unless you need it. Roof racks increase wind resistance, which can make a significant difference to your fuel consumption.

On warm days, driving with the windows open increases the drag on your car and your fuel consumption. But so does using the air-conditioner. So which should you choose? The general rule is for slower driving – under 45mph or so – open the windows. On motorways and faster roads, use the air conditioner.

Keep your tyres at the right pressure for your load and for the season. Under-inflated tyres increase your fuel consumption.

Have your car serviced and checked regularly to make sure it is performing at its optimal level.

Finally, relax and enjoy the trip – you'll probably drive better and more efficiently.

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