



Extension News Column

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Is \$4.25 and climbing gasoline prices getting to you? There are ways to make the most of that expensive gas. By employing a few techniques, you can improve the efficiency of your car.

The first idea is don't go—or go together. Share a ride with a family member or a neighbor. Still, nearly 3 of 4 cars in Fairbanks has only one rider, so share the ride with someone. One of my sons and I have been riding together to work. We work about 1 mile apart, so that is a little extra, but far better than the 10 miles we used to make in two cars.

If you are lucky enough to live on the bus route, or can walk to it, ride the bus. I traded \$1.50 (??) for a ride to work this week instead of the nearly \$4 that I would have spent on gasoline for the same distance. I also had a nice walk to the bus route. Not sure I'll be quite so eager to walk next winter at 40 below, but it is a possibility if gasoline continues its climb.

So let's share some quick ideas on what will improve the energy efficiency in our cars. I drive an older car and I'm not ready to trade. Though the gas mileage isn't sterling, I got some hints from my mechanic on how to get the best mileage I can.

- Check your tires. Proper inflation in the tires can save you ??% on mileage.
- Drive smoothly. No jackrabbit starts, and no screeching stops. Steady acceleration will save gasoline. When you see the light is changing to red, let off the accelerator. Coast up to the light. No reason to accelerate, then throw on the brakes.
- If you have to stop (for a light or a train) for longer than one minute, cut the engine off. It takes less gas to restart than to leave it idling.
- During the winter, don't leave the car idling while you run into the store. Again use the 1 minute rule. If it is warm when you stop the vehicle, it will stay warm for a couple of hours.

Keep your car in good repair to save money. Did you know that regular maintenance will save you 80% (???) on the cost of repairs. So you are doing maintenance that will keep you from having to make repairs. Here's a list of the top 5 repairs to make to improve your gas mileage:

- Replace your O2 sensors. If the proper amount of oxygen isn't being burned, you don't get efficient operation.

- Replace your air filter. They get plugged with dirt and grime, particularly if you live on a dirt road.
- Clean your fuel injectors. It will cost you about \$150-200, but will improve your gas mileage by 2%. You can recoup this expenditure in a couple of months, and you'll be saving the rest of the year.