

Gas Saving Ideas: Fact vs. Fiction

In spite of gas prices likely to decrease as Labor Day approaches, motorists continue to make significant adjustments in their driving styles in order to reduce the impact on their wallets. While many of these changes may sound good in theory some are actually counter-productive: Here are a few cited by Investopedia.com:

- **Airflow gadgets:** The idea is that high-tech devices intended to increase your engine's airflow will improve fuel efficiency. However Consumer Reports tested several such devices and found no noticeable gains in MPG despite claims of 50% fuel savings. While it's true that increasing airflow to an engine will increase horsepower, doing so actually accelerates fuel consumption and engine wear.
- **Fuel additives:** We drivers continue to search for magic elixirs that will increase MPG and indeed, many additives claim to do just that. According to CNN.com, one common tactic used by these products to gain our trust is to tout approval by the Environmental Protection Agency. However the EPA approval means only that the additive does not increase the vehicle's harmful emissions.
- **Higher octane fuel:** The idea often put forth is that 89 or 93 grade octane will result in better gas mileage – which is true but only for high performance vehicles. In fact, the majority of cars are meant to use standard 87 octane and switching to a higher grade may alter the car's combustion timing and decrease fuel efficiency.
- **Over inflated tires:** The theory seems sound—rounder tires roll easier creating less work for the engine and therefore better MPG. The reality is that over inflated tires wear much faster thereby diminishing the life of the tire. Trust the

manufacturer's recommended tire pressure which factors in efficiency *and* safety.



- **Roll down windows rather than use air conditioning:** It's true that it takes added fuel to operate the AC compressor. But open windows create drag which tends to significantly slow down the vehicle thereby requiring added fuel to maintain speed.

So what small changes can make a real difference?

- **Lowering highway speed from 75 to 55 MPH:** Consumer Reports found that this boosts gas mileage by 33% even in large SUVs.
- **Eliminate trunk junk.** By removing 100 lbs. you will increase gas mileage by 2% thereby saving about 8 cents per gallon.
- **Use cruise control:** According to Edmunds.com, even on lower speed suburban roads, the steadier accelerator adjustments provide a “surprisingly effective way to save gas.”
- **Use your GPS:** These don't just keep you from getting lost – they also show you the most efficient route to your destination.
- **Buddy up with GasBuddy.com:** Your EAP Information Resources site provides a direct link under *Tools for Tough Times*. Scroll down to Gas & Driving to discover the cheapest gas along your route as well as a wealth of valuable coupons, free Apps for iPhones, Android and Windows and even an interesting and lively blog site.