

42 Mechanic's Ways To Minimize Auto Repairs

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While most Americans neglect their automobile, the average U.S. car life is about 10 years (or 100,000 miles). With proper maintenance, you can double and even triple your car's life . This check list tells you what to do.

A. Every two weeks:

1. Check engine oil. Add oil if needed. Use correct viscosity.
2. Check radiator coolant level. Add water or anti-freeze if necessary.
3. Check paint for deep scratches, chips, rust. Repair any damage.

B. Once a month:

4. Check air pressure in all FIVE tires. Add air if required.
5. Check battery fluid (in UNsealed batteries). Add water if necessary.
6. Check fluid in power-steering pump reservoir. Add fluid if needed.

C. Every 3 months or 3,000 miles (whichever comes first):

7. Change entire oil.
8. Change oil filter.
9. Check automatic-transmission fluid level and condition. If necessary add additional fluid.
10. Check all drive belts (fan belts) on engine. Replace any if needed.
11. Adjust drum brakes with manual adjusters.

D. Every 6 months or 6,000 miles:

12. Check carburetor. Replace or make adjustments if necessary.
13. Check pollution-control equipment. Make any adjustments if needed.
14. Replace spark plugs.
15. Check clutch free play. Adjust if required.
16. Check oil in differential and manual transmission. Add oil if needed.
17. Check brake fluid level in master cylinder reservoir. Add brake fluid if necessary.
18. Rotate the tires.
19. Have headlights aimed.
20. Check air condition sight glass (if any). Add refrigerant if required.
21. Lubricate all locks and hinges.
22. Grease all chassis fittings.
23. Wax car body.

E. Every 12 months or 12,000 miles:

24. Inspect brake linings. Replace if necessary.
25. Time for major tune-up. Replace points, plugs, filters, plus adjustments to carburetor, ignition system and pollution-control equipment.
26. Repack wheel bearings.
27. Replace all air filters.
28. Replace all fuel filters.
29. Flush radiator and heater core. Replace antifreeze.
30. Have front-end alignment checked and corrected if needed.
31. Replace windshield wiper blades.
32. Clean crankcase breather cap.
33. Tighten bolts on engine manifolds.
34. Have automatic transmission bands adjusted (if possible).
35. Adjust valve clearance (if required on your car).

F. Every 2 years or 24,000 miles:

36. Replace PCV (positive crankcase ventilating) valve.
37. Bleed brake system and replace brake fluid.
38. Replace automatic transmission fluid and filter.

G. Every 3 years or 30,000 miles:

39. Replace all cooling system and heater hoses.
40. Replace oil in differential and manual transmission.
41. Test ignition cables and replace if needed.

H. Every 50,000 miles:

42. Replace catalytic converter (on cars so equipped).