

roadtrips: How Your Tires Can Save You Money

The secrets of low rolling resistance

In the world of tires, “low rolling resistance” is a lot like health care. It’s a topic that affects nearly all adults, but the majority of consumers are not very well versed about the subject.

This is partly because tires have long been put on the back burner. Consumers know their tires are round and have tread patterns, but most don’t want to think about them until those treads start to wear or there’s a flat.

Tires change greatly over time with wear and weather, and a lot of this metamorphosis is directly related to environmental issues. Nearly every hybrid vehicle now comes equipped with low rolling resistance (LRR) tires, which are designed to minimize the energy wasted as heat while the tire rolls down the road. A wide array of manufacturers are also developing LRR tires (in lieu of standard models) for gas-powered cars and trucks.

The overall result: better fuel efficiency. In fact, says Mark Chung, director of corporate planning and strategy for Yokohama Tire Corporation, studies have shown that for a vehicle averaging 15,000 miles a year, fuel savings (figured at \$3 per gallon) on LRR tires will be approximately \$100 annually.

“Think of a bicycle,” says Chung. “It takes more energy to pedal a bike when the tires have less air because more rubber is hitting the road. The same theory applies to your car. A lot of energy is used to overcome rolling resistance, so gas mileage suffers (and more CO₂ is emitted) as a direct result. This is the reason properly inflated LRR tires, which provide the least amount of resistance against the road, are gaining acceptance across the U.S.”

According to Chung, manufacturers of LRR tires adhere to the same federal guidelines used to control the traction, treadwear, and temperature resistance of every other type of tire. So for eco-conscious and budget-conscious drivers who truly want to maximize their mileage, the shift to low rolling resistance tires is a popular upgrade.

Some manufacturers have mastered the LLR art while others are still learning. And many original equipment and replacement tires still lack rolling



resistance labeling, warns Chung. “Therefore, consumers should consult their tire dealers before making any low rolling resistance purchase,” he says.

Chung reminds consumers that low rolling resistance tires are but one way drivers can help the environment and save money. He offers these additional tips:

- Keep your tires properly inflated. Once a month, when the tires are cold (at least three to four hours after the vehicle has been driven), check tire pressure with a reliable tire gauge. Be sure that the valve stems have a plastic or metal cap to keep dirt out and seal against leakage.
- Replace your air filter. A clogged air filter blocks the air needed to burn fuel efficiently which wastes gas.
- Keep your car tuned-up according to the manufacturer’s recommended schedule and you’ll keep all systems in good working order, which can optimize your mileage.
- Slow down. For every five miles per hour you go above 60 mph, you’re lowering your gas mileage and, ultimately, paying even more for each gallon of gas.

— Courtesy of ARAccontent

3 steps: Jump Starting Your Car Is Easier Than You Think

If it’s going to happen, it’s going to happen when you least expect it — and almost certainly when you’re least prepared for it. Whether it’s a frigid winter night, or you’re parked in a lot with terrible cell signal... one day your car’s battery will die.

Knowing how to jump start your vehicle is one of the smartest things you can learn, and it’s so much easier than you might think. Invest in a quality set of jumper cables (the best ones are made with multiple strands of copper wire and copper alligator clips) and make them part of your car’s emergency kit. You never know when you or someone else may need them. You may also want to include a pair of safety glasses or a spare set of sunglasses to protect your eyes, in the highly unlikely case there is an electrical spark.

STEP 1 — Position the front end of your car and the front end of your volunteer’s car as close together as possible. Open the hoods of both cars and locate the batteries and the batteries’ terminals. Look for the positive charges to be marked with a +, and negative charges with a –.

STEP 2 — Attach the two cars’ batteries using the jumper cables. Red jumper cables attach to the positive charge on both batteries and the black cables attach to the negative.

STEP 3 — Once the cars are connected, the car with the charged battery should be started. (Double check to be sure the cables aren’t interfering with any of the engine’s belts or pulleys.)

Leave the car with the charged battery running for a few minutes. This allows the dead battery to gain a charge. After a few minutes, try to start the other car. If it doesn’t start right away, check the jumper cable clips or the battery for corrosion or dirt. These can interfere with the charge. Also, be sure the clips are attached tightly to the battery post. Remember to complete the charge by allowing the car to idle for a few minutes. Turn off both engines and remove the battery jumper cables.

Car batteries do have a shelf life. After 60 months, your existing battery may start to fail. But with your AutoVantage money-saving benefits, investing in a new battery doesn’t have to break the bank. If your battery happens to fail before 60 months, it may be loose belts inside your car or a failing alternator. Download an AutoVantage coupon and take your car to a trusted service center to get it repaired, for less.

