

# Motorists can't afford to ignore maintenance

## Regular upkeep best way to combat rising sticker prices

**R**ising prices should have owners paying better attention to upkeep.

The average cost of a motor vehicle is approaching \$50,000, making it more important than ever to get the most value out of them.

Consumers willing to spend nearly a decade to pay for a car need to be just as willing to invest in the upkeep to drive it well past the final payment to regain their financial freedom. Otherwise, it's a long-term lease.

There are a host of steps owners can take to get the most life from their vehicles. They're not complicated but often are ignored. It can be time consuming, but they're essential in helping drivers keep more money in their pockets. They include:

- **Changing the air filter.** Clean air filters ensure the gasoline in the engine burns properly. Dirty and clogged filters result in lower gas mileage, the engine backfiring or shutting down completely. It's a minimal cost but a maximum benefit.
- **Ensure the battery connections are strong.** Weak batteries can have negative impacts on engines and make it difficult to start the vehicle. Disconnect the battery cables, clean around the connectors, using water to



**SMOOTH RUNNING** – Regular vehicle maintenance will keep it out of the shop and on the road for many years. Image: Dusko – Adobe Stock.

remove rust or corrosion, then reattach the cables. It's quick and simple and will ensure the car is getting maximum power.

- **Occasionally use high-end fuel.** Premium gasoline cleans the engine and its components. A random cleaning can keep the engine running longer without the need for repairs.

- **Pay attention to recalls.** Getting the needed repairs done to the vehicle can help extend its life. And the work is done for free.
- **Use the parking brake.** The parking brake holds the car's transmission in place when its static and helps the engine.
- **Buy the correct engine oil.**

Consult the owner's manual. It will state which type to use and recommend a particular brand. Have the oil and oil filter changed regularly to maintain the life of the engine.

- **Frequently wash the vehicle, particularly in the winter.** Road salt is corrosive and can deteriorate the body. Washing the car can prevent rust from developing. Car washes are an inexpensive way to keep the vehicle out of the body shop.
- **Keep the fluids topped off.** All fluids. From windshield-washer fluid to engine coolant, brake fluid, power-steering fluid and water in the radiator. This will ensure the vehicle is performing optimally and keep it on the road for many years.

Consistently maintaining our vehicles never has been more important. Rising sticker prices and lengthy loans force many consumers into keeping the car an extended period of time. A little upkeep can go a long way and lead to a smooth relationship.

You can ignore these factors and motor on. Perhaps for many miles. But do so at your peril. Eventually, they'll get you in the wallet. It's best to simply heed the old adage: Don't be penny-wise and pound foolish.

## Are They Protected?

Make sure that no one in your family is left stranded without help when they need it. With all the benefits you receive as a AAA member, you already understand the value of your AAA membership. You can stretch this great value even further with low-cost associate memberships for other eligible members of your household! Associate members enjoy the same security, services, and savings provided by your primary membership. And, as an added bonus, Junior Associate membership extends AAA coverage to dependent children ages 16, 17 & 18 residing at the Primary Member's address or away at school. They are renewed at no cost until age 19!

**Call  
or Visit us  
Today for a  
Special  
Offer**



**CALL 1-800-441-5008**



**VISIT YOUR LOCAL AAA OFFICE**

All Members in a household must retain the same coverage. Associate membership is available to the Primary Member's spouse or one adult age 18 or older and dependent children through age 25 who reside in the same household or who are away at school. Special offer not valid with the Monthly Dues Option. Restrictions apply.