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What certain noises may indicate about your car

Automobiles have come a long way since their introduction more than 100 years ago. Though modern cars and trucks still employ some of the same principles as their forebears, the vehicles people drive today bear little resemblance to those that made waves in the early part of the twentieth century.

Modern automobiles are technological marvels, which has made both driving and maintaining a vehicle much simpler. In regard to maintenance, built-in diagnostic systems can now alert drivers when something is wrong with their vehicles. Though that feature is undeniably useful, drivers can still benefit from learning to recognize issues by ear. Many issues that can affect a car or truck produce unusual sounds, and learning what certain noises may indicate can help drivers detect problems as soon as possible.

· **Rattling sound in a wheel well:** Most people have mistakenly placed clothing in a dryer without realizing they had spare change in their pockets. That mistake is immediately apparent once the dryer starts thanks to the unpleasant noise of coins bouncing off the interior of the machine. Drivers may hear a similar sound when behind the wheel and wonder what's behind it. Such a sound is often indicative that there's a loose lug nut inside the hubcap. This issue can arise when drivers don't tighten the wheel properly after changing their own tire, or if

mechanics make the same mistake when rotating or replacing tires during a routine maintenance session.

· **Squeaking sound:** The auto insurance experts at Geico® note that rear-wheel or four-wheel drive vehicles may produce a rhythmic squeaking sound when an issue arises with the universal joint. JD Power notes that the universal joint, often referred to as a U-joint, is part of the system that enables the rotating crankshaft in the engine of a vehicle to transfer that rotating motion to the rear wheels. U-joints get a workout whenever vehicles are driven, so they require maintenance, and a squeaking sound is one indicator that the U-joint needs to be addressed immediately.

· **Squealing sound:** A high-pitched squealing sound is typically indicative of worn out brake pads. However, Cars.com notes that if such a sound is only present when a car is first driven in the morning, it could just be surface rust being scraped off the rotors. After a few initial applications of the brakes, that sound might disappear. If it doesn't, the vehicle will likely need new brake pads.

· **Scraping on the windshield during rain:** The scraping sound on a windshield when the wipers are in use should not be taken lightly or be interpreted as a sign that the rain is only falling slightly. In fact, that sound indicates the wipers are worn out, which means



they're not effectively clearing the windshield. In addition, the wipers could be scratching the windshield each time they produce this sound, ultimately necessitating a costly windshield replacement. Wiper blades can be replaced in a matter of minutes, so address this issue promptly.

Learning to recognize the culprits behind various vehicle noises can help drivers nip problems in the bud before they compromise the automobile and the safety of the people inside it.

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3 simple maintenance strategies that can keep cars running longer

The last few years have not proven the most advantageous times for new car buyers. According to the Consumer Price Index Summary from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, buyers paid 12.2 percent more for new vehicles in January 2022 than they had in January 2021. Faced with such a significant increase in price, many drivers understandably want to keep their current cars longer than they might have initially planned.

Data released by S&P Global Mobility in early 2022 indicated that the average vehicle on the road is 12 years and two months old, which marked the highest number in the 20-plus years such information was tracked. A host of variables affect how long drivers keep their cars, but the rising cost of new vehicles has undoubtedly compelled many drivers to aspire to keep their cars for longer periods of time.

Aging cars may require a little more TLC than vehicles that are right off the dealership lot. But the following are three simple tips that can

help drivers keep their cars running longer.

1. Become a more careful driver. A careful approach when behind the wheel is safer than aggressive driving and beneficial for your vehicle. When starting, avoid revving the engine, which needlessly wears it down. When out on the road, avoid rapid accelerations, which also contributes to needless wear and tear. Even excessive idling can adversely affect the engine, so keep winter warm-ups to around 30 seconds to prevent damage to engine components.

2. Know when and how to fill up. Every driver has likely visited a filling station when an oil tanker is busily filling the tanks. That's traditionally been considered a less than ideal time to fill up, as the theory is that filling the tanks stirs up sediment that could then find its way into consumers' gas tanks, adversely affecting their vehicles. However, that's often dependent on the station itself and how much its owners prioritize maintenance of the tank and filtration systems. Drivers who

See **3** SIMPLE on Page 5

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Warning signs that brakes are faltering

Automotive problems are often best left to professionals. Though seasoned car enthusiasts may be capable of diagnosing and fixing car troubles without the assistance of a trusted mechanic, most drivers are better off letting the pros address issues under the hood.

But drivers can still play a vital role in vehicle maintenance. Learning to recognize warning signs of various problems that can affect cars can prevent breakdowns and potentially costly repairs. And in certain instances, such as when the brake system is not working properly, knowing how to spot problems before they escalate into something larger can make drivers and their passengers safer and potentially prevent accidents.

Television shows and movies have lent credence to the notion that brake problems are marked by the sudden cessation of a vehicle's ability to stop. Though that can happen, warning signs of fading brake systems tend to be more subtle.

Noises: Much like a knocking sound typically indicates a problem with a vehicle's air-fuel ration mixture, certain noises also suggest there are problems with the brakes. The most noticeable such sign is a high-pitched squeal that occurs when

drivers apply the brakes. But grinding sounds and noises like scratching and scraping also warrant a visit to a brake specialist.

Increase in stopping distance: An increase in the distance a vehicle travels before it stops after the brakes are applied indicates that there's an issue with the brakes. This issue may or may not require a brake replacement. In fact, it's sometimes indicative that brake fluid levels are low, which can be remedied quickly and easily. However, an increase in stopping distance is significant enough that it should be brought to the attention of a brake specialist immediately.

Pulling upon stopping: Another warning sign of brake problems is when the vehicle noticeably pulls to one side as it comes to a stop. This indicates that one side of the brakes is malfunctioning while the other is working properly. Like other issues with brakes, this one requires immediate attention from an automotive professional.

Brake systems should be inspected during routine maintenance visits. But issues with brakes can arise even after such inspections, which underscores how important it is that drivers learn to recognize the warning signs of brake problems.





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3 SIMPLE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

trust their local station owners can likely fill up when the tankers are present without worry. In addition, avoid topping off once the nozzle clicks when filling up. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency notes that topping off is harmful to the planet and the vehicle, as gasoline needs room to expand. When you top off, the extra gas may damage the vapor collection system and cause the vehicle to run less efficiently.

3. Change oil more frequently as the vehicle ages. It's true that modern vehicles no longer require oil changes for every 3,000 miles driven. However, as vehicles age, drivers and

their vehicles' engines may benefit from more frequent oil changes than the owner's manual necessarily recommends. Oil changes remove dirt and metal particles from the engine, potentially contributing to a longer life expectancy. More frequent changes can be especially beneficial for vehicles that are routinely driven in stop-and-go traffic.

Rising vehicle costs have compelled many drivers to keep their cars longer than they initially planned. Some simple strategies can help drivers achieve that goal.





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Apps that can make driving safer and easier

It's hard to go anywhere without using or coming into contact with technology. For drivers, that includes their vehicles, which have come a long way since the Ford Motor Company's Model T was first introduced more than a century ago.

Devices and driving are now undeniably intertwined. Preoccupation with technology when behind the wheel can pose a threat to motorists, as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that more than 3,100 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted driving in 2020. But technology also can be utilized to great and positive effect. Various apps can help make driving safer, potentially reducing the number of accidents and fatalities on the nation's roadways.

• **OneTap:** OneTap was designed to put an end to distracted driving. Once enabled, the OneTap app blocks incoming alerts on drivers' phones and automatically replies to let individuals calling or sending messages that drivers will get in touch when they reach their destination. Drivers can manually activate the app each time they get in their vehicles, or set it up so it automatically activates when the car begins moving. The latter approach can be especially useful for drivers who may forget to activate it when getting in their cars.

• **DriveMode:** DriveMode was designed for drivers who want a hands-free messaging and calling option while behind the wheel. The app utilizes voice-enabled commands so drivers reply to messages or texts using only their voice, and it also can be integrated with navigation, music and voice assistant apps. Drivers can choose to have the app launch automatically when they start driving.

• **OtoZen:** OtoZen can appeal to any drivers looking to be more safe, but it can be especially useful for parents of young drivers. Users can track family and friends with the app's GPS tracker that can share location information in real time. Incoming messages are delivered through users' car speakers, and speed alerts notify drivers when they exceed safe speed limits.

• **OnMyWay:** The OnMyWay app automatically disables apps when vehicles are moving faster than 10 miles per hour. That functionality eliminates phone-related distractions like incoming text messages. But the hands-free component of the OnMyWay app allows users to make phone calls, use navigation apps and even play music.

Modern vehicles are testaments to technological innovation. Drivers can use that to their advantage by utilizing various apps designed specifically to reduce distracted driving.



What to do after an auto accident

Car accidents occur every day. According to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there are more than five million car accidents in the United States every year. Forty-three percent of car accidents resulted in injuries in 2020.

No one wants to get into an automobile accident, which can be stressful and even fatal. Even accidents that do not result in any major injuries can be traumatizing. Knowing what to do in the immediate aftermath of an accident may make such instances less stressful.

Assess the situation

The insurance experts at GEICO® advise individuals involved in an accident to first determine if any of the involved parties suffered an injury. If you are injured, stay put. If not, check on the condition of the other driver. At this point do not admit any fault or reveal any policy limits.

Next, make a call to emergency services to request assistance from the police and an ambulance, if necessary.

Move your vehicle

If possible, pull the vehicle over to a safe, well-lit public location. This is especially important if you believe you were the victim of a staged accident, says the Insurance

Information Institute. If the car will cause another road hazard, it is best to move it over to the side and use flashers to alert oncoming traffic. It is important that you don't leave the scene, according to American Property any skid marks, debris and/or property damage. If there are any witnesses to the accident, get their names and contact information. You'll need this information when filing an insurance claim.

Exchange information

Collect the names, phone numbers, addresses and email addresses of other drivers and vehicle occupants and exchange insurance information with all drivers involved. That includes the insurance company name, policy number and the name of the insured.

Notify a friend or family member

Even if the accident is not serious, you may want to call a friend or family member to provide emotional support. If you've been injured, a friend or family member can meet you at the hospital and/or arrange to have your vehicle towed or returned home while you get the care you need.

Automotive accidents can be nerve-wracking. Knowing the steps to take can alleviate some stress.



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What to do about headlight glare when driving at night

In recent years, many a motorist has noticed how much more glare they encounter on the road at night than they used to. The headlights that are now standard in many vehicles can be a catch-22. Drivers of vehicles equipped with LED lights often find the road in front of them is much more illuminated than it was in the days when auto manufacturers built cars and trucks with incandescent lights. However, the bright light emitted by LED headlights can increase glare for oncoming motorists, making the roads more dangerous for all.

Headlight glare has long been a problem for many drivers. In fact, as far back as 2001 the Highway Traffic and Safety Administration sought input from the public regarding headlight glare. A subsequent report noted that the issue compelled more responses than any other safety concern, and it's likely that a similar request would generate an even greater response today.

LED lights might be a problem for millions of motorists, but the efficiency and longevity of these lights makes it unlikely that auto manufacturers will shift to an alternative light source anytime soon. Until that time comes, drivers can try these strategies to combat glare when driving at night.

Avoid looking directly at oncoming headlights. It's



important that drivers keep their eyes on the road at all times, but they should be able to do so without staring directly at oncoming lights. In North America, where oncoming traffic is always on the left, drivers can slightly shift their focus to the right as lights are oncoming. Doing so should allow them to keep their

eyes on the road without staring directly into oncoming lights.

Purchase night driving glasses. Drivers can consider night driving glasses if they're having a lot of trouble with glare. Such glasses differ depending on the manufacturer, but they're generally

See **GLARE** on Page 9

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GLARE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

intended to reduce glare and reflections from headlights and street lamps.

Investigate wiper blades. Glare from oncoming headlights contribute to visibility problems when driving at night, and old wiper blades can exacerbate those problems. Old wiper blades can be compromised by a buildup of dirt and often wear down over time. When coupled with glare, this can significantly reduce visibility at night. Each manufacturer is different, but Ford

recommends replacing wiper blades once every 12 months.

Clean the interior of your windshield. A dirty windshield interior also can exacerbate glare. Grit and dirt build up inside of a vehicle over time, and they can accumulate on the windshield just as easily as they do in a cup holder, on an armrest or on the dashboard. Various products are designed specifically for cleaning interior windshields, and these could help reduce glare at night.

Glare can make nighttime driving very difficult. Fortunately, drivers can take many steps to reduce glare from oncoming headlights.



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How to handle driving in heavy rain

The road is filled with variables that change each time drivers get behind the wheel. Whether it's aggressive drivers, road construction crews or some other unknown, drivers can never say with certainty what they will encounter while on the road.

Mother Nature is as significant a variable as any drivers will face, and many conditions can turn otherwise ordinary trips into ordeals that put motorists' skills to the test. Though heavy rain might not seem as difficult to navigate as snow, it's vital that drivers recognize the threat posed by such conditions. In fact, the Federal Highway Administration reports that each year 75 percent of weather-related vehicle crashes occur on wet pavement, while 47 percent, or nearly half, happen while rain is falling.

Such statistics are sobering and underscore how dangerous it can be to drive in rain or when roads are wet. Drivers are not helpless in such conditions, especially when they exercise caution in wet conditions.

• **Slow down.** The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration notes that drivers will have a harder time controlling or stopping their vehicles on slick roads than dry roads. And that's the case for both experienced and novice motorists. When driving in the rain or on wet roads, drivers should slow down, even if it requires driving a little below the speed limit. Though it can be dangerous to drive too slowly on highways, drivers can use the far-right lane on such roads, which is not considered a passing lane and is often seen as the lane designated



for vehicles moving more slowly.

• **Leave extra room between your car and other vehicles.** The NHTSA also advises increasing the following distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you when driving in rain or on wet roads. An extra couple of car lengths ensures you will have more time to react and stop if vehicles ahead of you encounter issues.

• **Be mindful of pedestrians and cyclists.** Though pedestrians and cyclists typically avoid walking or cycling in heavy rains, that does not mean there will be none on the road. That's especially so when heavy rains fall suddenly, leaving pedestrians and cyclists already on the road with little options but to continue. Visibility can be especially compromised in heavy rains, which makes it even harder to see pedestrians and cyclists. So drivers should not assume the roads are only populated by fellow motorists and

must be especially vigilant to avoid hitting pedestrians and cyclists.

• **Travel familiar roads.** Though familiarity does not mean motorists can be less vigilant when driving in rain, knowing the roads you're on and the route you're taking can ensure your eyes are focused on the road at all times and not periodically glancing at GPS maps on your dashboard. If you're planning a road trip and know heavy rain will factor in at some time, familiarize yourself with evacuation routes along the way to your destination. The NHTSA also recommends drivers learn which local radio stations to tune into for emergency alerts.

Driving in heavy rain is no small task. But drivers can approach such conditions with caution to ensure they make it home safe.



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How to maintain an older vehicle

New cars have been costly for quite some time, but those costs have spiked considerably since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. That unprecedented rise has led many motorists to wonder how they can get more mileage out of their existing vehicles.

According to data from Kelley Blue Book and Cox Automotive, the average cost of a new car in September 2021 was just over \$45,000. That marked a \$3,000 increase from June 2021 and a \$5,000 increase from the end of 2020.

Drivers who can't afford to keep up with the rising cost of new vehicles can take these steps to keep their existing cars running smoothly for years to come.

• **Take care of the timing belt.** Engines may get all the glory, but they cannot run smoothly without a fully functional timing belt. Engines need various components to do their job, and those components must do so at the right time for the engine to run smoothly. Fully functional timing belts help to synchronize movements, but belts must be replaced every so often. Owner's manuals may note when to replace the timing belt, but they generally

must be replaced every 60,000 to 105,000 miles. That's infrequent, but drivers can ask their mechanics to keep an eye on their timing belts. One issue many drivers encountered in the early months of the pandemic when people were driving less frequently was timing belts that were failing long before they reached the projected mile markers. That's because infrequent driving can hasten the demise of the timing belt. This is something for aging drivers who no longer drive a lot to keep in mind.

• **Take care of the brakes and associated components.** The experts at Popular Mechanics urge drivers of older vehicles to replace their brake fluid every two years. Popular Mechanics also advises drivers whose cars are more than seven years old to replace the rubber brake lines when major brake work is required.

• **Pay attention to oil levels.** The older engines get, the more oil they're going to burn. So drivers of older vehicles should check their oil levels more often than they would if their vehicles were brand new. This also is a great way to discover

See **OLDER** on Page 16

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Useful tips when driving in busy cities

Urban environments beckon millions of people. In addition to being home to various industries, city centers tend to feature museums, shopping, sightseeing, and much more.

Although public transportation might be the simplest way to get into and around a city, some metropolitan areas feature inadequate public transit systems, leaving visitors with no choice but to drive.

Driving in metropolitan areas is unlike driving in suburban or rural locations. City driving presents a unique set of challenges. These tips can help drivers unaccustomed to being behind the wheel in urban environments.

Expect slower speeds

Driving on city streets is unlike driving on open highways or suburban roads. A greater number of vehicles leads to more cramped, slow-moving roads. Furthermore, there likely will be more traffic signals, which will do their part to slow down traffic even further.

Watch for pedestrians

Pedestrians typically have the right of way. Urban areas have an abundance of walkers, cyclists and others crossing intersections and sharing the road. It's important to be mindful of your surroundings because one never knows when a pedestrian might dart out.

Avoid rush hour

If possible, avoid driving in cities during rush hours, which occur twice per day. Lunchtime also can be busy. According to DrivingTests.org, rush hour peaks between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. Drivers who venture into the city during these times likely will be met with gridlock and even slower travel.

Know where you're going

Utilize GPS systems and check maps and addresses before departing to have a good idea of the destination. Cities have many streets and one wrong turn can get you stuck in more traffic. Some cities employ one-way streets, so watch where you're going. Pay attention to signs as well, as they may indicate no left turns at

certain hours.

Be patient

The extra commotion and traffic can be tiresome. Leave plenty of extra time to get to your destination so that you're not exacerbating your stress by worrying that you're going to be late. Get sufficient rest and don't drive hungry, as hunger can lead to anxiety.

Plan for parking

In addition to knowing the route, get a good idea of where to park the car in the metropolitan area. Cities have unique parking regulations, including metered parking. Plus, popular points of interest may draw many visitors competing for a limited number of on-street parking spots. It may be worth it to park in a private or public lot/garage. Spot Hero, Secure-a-Spot and ParKing are just a few of the parking assistance apps that enable drivers to find and secure parking in advance.

Driving in urban environments requires a different skill set. Learn what to do and remain patient so the experience is not stressful.



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10 gifts for automotive enthusiasts

The roar of the engine and the feeling of the wind in your hair is part of the magic of taking to the open road behind the wheel of a beloved vehicle. Whether a person is the ultimate gear head who needs to have the latest aftermarket accessory or someone who simply appreciates a pristine ride, auto enthusiasts come in all shapes and sizes. Luckily, there are all types of automotive gifts that can make it easy to impress car guys and gals this holiday season.

1. Dashboard cell phone holder: Using a mobile phone while driving is not a good idea. However, many people use their phones as GPS devices. Holding a phone while navigating is dangerous, but a phone mount near the dash can keep the phone visible without compromising the safety of drivers and their passengers.

2. Customized floor mats: Know an auto fanatic who's also a sports fan? Offer a gift that mixes the two passions, such as floor mats featuring a favorite sports team's logo.

3. Cleansing wipes: When drivers are short on time, a full car wash and wax may not be possible. Drop Wipes are a product made from a neutralizing acid that destabilizes

stains or bird droppings for an easy cleaning.

4. Magazine subscription: A wide selection of publications are geared to auto enthusiasts. They provide plenty of pertinent information, and some car lovers like to collect and display certain issues. Yearly subscriptions are affordable and can make ideal stocking stuffers.

5. Racing experience gift certificate: Research racing car schools and experiences where you live. Chances are you can find an opportunity for an automotive enthusiast to get behind the wheel of a race car with professional drivers offering tips for navigating the course at high speeds.

6. Car cleaning kit: Taking care of a ride means making sure it is clean inside and out. A quality car cleaning kit can ensure the job is done effectively and the car or truck always looks its best.

7. Personalized leather keychain: Ensure that a person can drive and keep their keys handy in style with leather keychains engraved with a driver's name or initials.

8. Racing video games: A love for the open road may not end

See **ENTHUSIASTS**
on Page 16

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Maintenance intervals drivers should know

Vehicles are among the most costly expenses individuals have. According to data from Kelley Blue Book, the average price paid for a new vehicle in the United States in September 2022 was \$48,094. Canadian car buyers face an equally expensive reality in their country, where the average MSRP for a new car is more than \$45,000.

Since vehicles are such sizable investments, it behooves motorists to do as much as they can to keep their cars and trucks running smoothly. Vehicle owner's manuals typically recommend maintenance intervals and should be drivers' first resource for information regarding how to take care of their cars and trucks. But the following are some standard maintenance intervals drivers can keep in mind.

3,000 miles

The 3,000-mile marker used to be the benchmark for changing oil, but modern vehicles can now go longer between oil changes. However, it's still a good idea to check other fluid levels every 3,000 miles. Windshield washer fluid, coolant, brake fluid, transmission fluid, and power steering fluid should all be checked every 3,000 miles and topped off if levels are low.

It's wise for drivers to perform some additional maintenance checkups every 3,000 miles. Check tire pressure, inspect hoses (which should not be leaking or bulging) and clean the interior of the vehicle every 3,000 miles.

5,000 miles

Many vehicle manufacturers now recommend oil changes every 5,000 miles. Tire rotations also can be part of service visits at this interval, and drivers can ask their mechanic to check their fuel filters



and batteries every 5,000 miles as well. Many may already do this as part of their comprehensive maintenance packages, but it's still good to confirm if they do and request they do so if it's not part of the plan.

Drivers also can request that cabin air filters are inspected at this point, though they can generally last a year before they need to be replaced.

Around the 5,000-mile mark, wiper blades also may begin to show signs of wear and tear, including streaking on the windshield or scratching noises when in use. Each of those signs indicates the wipers need to be replaced. However, drivers should take note of these signs regardless of when they appear. Some may not make it 5,000 miles before they begin to wear down. In such instances, they should be replaced immediately regardless of how many miles it's been since they were installed.

10,000 miles

Some vehicles may only require oil changes every 10,000 miles. That's not uncommon in vehicles that use synthetic oil, though drivers are urged to consult their owner's manuals.

Brake pads also may need to be replaced around this time, and one telltale sign of that is a squeaking noise whenever the brakes are applied.

Drivers can ask their mechanics to check the alignment of their vehicles around this interval as well. Though many vehicles won't develop alignment issues, it's best to check for such issues every 10,000 miles or whenever a vehicle feels as though it's pulling in one specific direction.

Maintenance intervals are created to serve as a guideline for drivers. Any issues that arise should still be brought to the attention of a mechanic regardless of how many miles have been added to the odometer since the most recent trip to the garage.




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How to effectively and safely sanitize a car

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way people live. One readily felt effect was spending more time at home. Vehicles sat idle in driveways and even some automotive insurance providers reduced rates because people were driving much less.

Even with stay-at-home measures in place, people still need to leave their homes to stock up on essentials, such as food or medicine. In other cases, people may have been essential workers who drive for a living, including delivery drivers or health care personnel who were incapable of working from home.

Any time a person goes out in public, he or she runs the risk of contracting viruses. Bacteria and germs may reside on various surfaces, including those inside vehicles.

People want to protect themselves and now are more aware of the importance of frequently cleaning and sanitizing their cars. Keeping a vehicle safe to drive without affecting its upholstery or electronic components is paramount.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention makes a distinction between cleaning and disinfecting. Cleaning refers to the removal of germs, dirt and impurities from surfaces. It does not kill germs, but can lower their numbers. Disinfecting refers to using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. The following are some ways to deeply clean and sanitize a car.

• **Wash hands.** First and foremost, it is crucial to wash your hands

before and after using the car. This can reduce the likelihood of growing ill because of transferred viruses or bacteria.

• **Use rubbing alcohol.** Solutions that contain 70 percent alcohol are effective against many viruses and bacteria, including coronaviruses, says the CDC. Furthermore, Jeff Stout, Executive Director of Global Innovation at Yanfeng Automotive Interiors, says that, for the most part, nearly every interior surface of a vehicle can be cleaned with isopropyl alcohol. Plastic to painted chrome to imitation leather have been tested to ensure they don't degrade when exposed to pure isopropyl alcohol.

• **Avoid bleach or hydrogen peroxide.** While bleach and peroxide are very effective cleaners and sanitizers, they are likely to damage a car's upholstery, according to Consumer Reports.

• **Use soap and water:** Experts say that vigorous washing with a soap-and-water solution can be effective against many contaminants because it breaks down the protective envelope that surrounds coronaviruses and other germs to disarm them. Friction also can help to break down germ cells during cleaning.

"You want to do the best with what you have, so even soap and water can chip away at the risk," says Stephen Thomas, M.D., Chief of Infectious Diseases and Director of Global Health at Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, NY.

• **Address frequently touched surfaces.** Pay See **SANITIZE** on Page 16

How to avoid hot weather automotive breakdowns

When the weather warms, many people take to the outdoors to enjoy the sunshine and rising temperatures. Summer road trips or vacations are the norm, but it is important to realize that hot weather can take its toll even on a new, well-maintained vehicle.

Battery

Excessive heat can shorten the life of a battery because it causes battery fluid to evaporate more quickly. This, in turn, can damage the internal structure of the battery. AAA reports that car battery issues are the most common breakdown calls.

Cooling system

Cooling systems work hard to keep the flow of air to the engine and prevent it from overheating during warm seasons. Compromised cooling fans or lack of coolant can be troublesome. To avoid overheating, check coolant levels before getting on the road. In addition, have the cooling system checked by a trained mechanic prior to the summer driving season. It's a small price to pay to avoid extensive engine damage from overheating.

Tires

Hot weather causes the pressure inside of tires to rise. Overinflated tires can wear down prematurely or result in blowouts. Check the tire pressure routinely in the summer, when tires are cold. Follow the guidelines in the owner's manual for recommended air pressure. Look for improper tread wear, weak spots or other tire damage that may end up causing flats.

Fluid levels

Hot weather can put extra demand on all fluids and engine components. Check transmission fluid, power steering fluid, brake fluid and engine oil levels. Top off or change when necessary.

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OLDER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

leaks before they lead to potentially significant issues.

•Don't skip maintenance appointments. Even if you're still driving less due to the pandemic, it's best not to skip recommended maintenance intervals. That's true for drivers of all cars, but especially those whose vehicles are

aging. Routine tune-ups and oil changes, which may need to become more frequent the older the vehicle gets, can keep cars running smoothly and protect the engine over the long haul.

The rising cost of new cars is compelling millions of drivers to keep their cars longer than they might have anticipated. Some simple maintenance measures can help those cars run strong for years to come.

ENTHUSIASTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

when cars pull into the driveway. Modern racing games and consoles produce incredibly realistic graphics and action that mimics real life.

9. Automotive cufflinks: As a nod to a love of driving, find quirky cufflinks that are shaped like everything from gear shifters to speedometers to steering wheels.

10. Roof or car racks:

When a love of driving merges with the call of the great outdoors, drivers may need something to help haul their stuff. Various racks have been designed for toting around bicycles, kayaks, luggage, and more.

When gifting automotive enthusiasts, look no further than their favorite hobby for inspiration.

SANITIZE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

attention to the steering wheel, door handles, buttons, touchscreen displays, shift lever, and more when sanitizing.

Each of these items can harbor germs.

Deep-cleaning a vehicle has become a necessity since COVID-19 emerged. Frequently cleaning and sanitizing can help make vehicles safer to operate.

get the
keys

Friends don't let friends drive drunk

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