



Fall Car 2023 Care

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The basics of EVs for first-time buyers

Electric vehicles are increasingly visible on roadways around the world. According to BloombergNEF, a strategic research provider covering global commodity markets, in June 2022 there were 20 million plug-in vehicles in use across the globe. That's an increase from only one million in 2016. As more people are drawn to EVs, drivers can exercise due diligence to learn more about them, particularly if they're considering buying their first such vehicle.

Different vehicle types

The term "electric vehicle" encompasses a variety of cars and trucks. The following are some common categories.

- Hybrid electric vehicle: These are the most common type of hybrids. They have two power drives, which include a fuel-based engine and an electric motor with a larger battery. A computer determines when electricity or gas should be used. The system utilizes regenerative braking that ensures the electric

battery gets a little recharge every time the driver touches the breaks

- Mild hybrid electric vehicle: MHEVs use a battery and electric motor to increase the efficiency of an internal combustion engine (ICE). An MHEV does not run solely on electric power, but the ICE can be turned off and the electric motor used while braking, coasting and stopping.

- Battery electric vehicle: BEVs are powered entirely by electricity and will have no ICE or fuel tank. Users charge the battery using an electrical outlet.

- Plug-in hybrid electric vehicle: Like BEVs, PHEVs have an electric motor that is charged by plugging it in. They also have a fuel-based ICE like HEVs. Where they differ is that PHEVs can travel a considerable distance on electric power alone, while HEVs cannot.

Driving range

The distance EVs can travel before needing to recharge depends on the type of vehicle. Most EVs have a driving range between 50 and 330 miles. Shoppers should determine the "range-per-charge" for the vehicle to assess if it will fit their driving needs and daily commutes. Drivers who frequently take long road trips may have to assess if a hybrid vehicle is more practical; otherwise, careful planning may be necessary to accommodate charging along the route.

Parking and charging situation

Individuals who live in private homes or rentals with access to outlets may be more inclined to invest in EVs. Charging can be done with a standard 120V outlet, but it will increase charging time considerably. Many people opt to have a 240V charger installed in a garage or driveway, which is known as "Level 2 ESVE equipment." With this type of setup, a charge can be reached in roughly four to six hours, says Valley Clean Energy. Public charging stations utilize a 480V input and can charge many EV models in about 20 to 30 minutes. Plug-in hybrid vehicles do not typically have fast charging capabilities, however.

Reduce maintenance

BEVs require less maintenance than conventional vehicles because there are fewer fluids like oil and transmission fluid to change, and far fewer moving parts. EVs require minimal scheduled maintenance to electrical systems, including the battery and electrical motor. Hybrid vehicles still require the standard maintenance of gas-powered vehicles.

EVs are growing in popularity, so potential buyers can school themselves on these newer vehicles to determine if they're the right fit for them.

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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 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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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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