



Chris Chambers DSA ADI (car) | 17 Cumberland Road, Sunderland, SR3 1JZ

07951 047 894 | info@chrischambers-som.com | www.chrischambers-som.com | [www.chrischambers-som.tel](tel:07951047894)

ECONOMY DRIVING (ECO-SAFE)

The term 'Eco' is a one that has become a part of everyday conversation. In a world where everyone is looking to 'do their bit' to help save the planet, we as drivers' can play our part too by adapting our style of driving. Doing so will help reduce the damage to our planet, improve the quality of air we breathe (transport is currently thought to account for around 20% of all air pollution emissions), improve road safety and reduce the wear & tear on our vehicles, whilst also saving money on the running costs of our vehicles' - savings of which, over a period of time can add up considerably.

Below are just some of the tips you can utilise in making positive adjustments to your style of driving:

Tip #1

Try to identify hazards well in advance and drive at an appropriate speed for traffic, road and weather conditions - this will minimise the need for harsh braking or stopping unnecessarily. Utilise the 'engine braking' effect of the engine to slow down gradually and more efficiently as opposed to braking late and losing too much forward momentum.

Tip #2

Where possible and, of course, safe to do so, try to minimise using harsh acceleration. Aggressive acceleration increases the amount of fuel used, and if you've not planned your acceleration correctly you'll likely be required to brake later and more aggressively. Furthermore, allow gravity to assist your progress when going down-hill by releasing your foot pressure on the accelerator (gas) pedal.

Tip #3

You should aim to move up through the gears fairly briskly where conditions allow and avoid travelling in too low a gear for too long when it's not necessary. If you should find that your engine appears louder and to be revving higher than normal during normal driving, this is likely to be the engines way of telling you that a higher gear is needed. As a general reference point, change up the gearbox when the rev counter (engine speed) reaches approximately 2,500 rpm (revolutions per minute) for petrol powered engines; this should be reduced slightly to 2,000 rpm for diesel powered vehicles.

You should aim to use the accelerator (gas) pedal in a smooth, progressive manner. Also, try to avoid using a 'pumping' action as this will feed more fuel into the engine, but in many situations, without a noticeable change in speed or performance.

Tip #4

Aim to make progress at an appropriate speed for the road and conditions. Keeping to the speed limit for a given road will help conserve fuel. Where possible, and provided that doing so isn't going to cause an inconvenience to other road users, you could travel below the designated speed limit - for example, by travelling at 50 miles per hour (mph) as opposed to 70 mph, it's thought that fuel economy can be improved by up to 25 per cent (25%).

Tip #5

When waiting in traffic for an extended period of time (more than maybe a minute or two), or you feel that you are likely to be, switch your engine off. By allowing the engine to idle or 'tick-over' you are simply wasting fuel and adding unnecessary Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions in to the environment. It is also advisable to switch off your engine when waiting for someone.

Tip #6

Always ensure that your tyres are kept correctly inflated. Under-inflated tyres can be responsible for poor vehicle handling and road holding (as can over-inflated tyres for that matter) as well as creating excessive and unnecessary resistance and drag (due to the increase in 'rolling resistance'). Because of this, you are essentially using more fuel to compensate for it. It's thought that driving with under-inflated tyres can increase your fuel consumption by as much as 3 per cent (3%). In addition to this, should your tyres be under-inflated by approximately 20 per cent (20%), it's likely that you'll reduce the road-legal life of the tyre by up to as much as 30 per cent (30%).

Please note that if you're uncertain of the correct tyre pressures required for your vehicle, you should confirm this by either looking in your vehicle owners' handbook, or alternatively you should seek advice from your local tyre specialist.

Tip #7

Remove any roof mounted equipment when it's not in use. Equipment such a roof-rack or roof-box alters the aerodynamic properties of a vehicle, which in turn decreases the vehicles' ability to move cleanly through the air. These factors will increase your vehicles' fuel consumption in the same way as you would need to use more energy when walking in to a head-wind.

Tip #8

Remove any unnecessary weight from your vehicle. Nothing hampers a vehicles' performance like excessive weight. Carrying excess weight also increases the vehicles' fuel consumption as the engine is required to work harder.

Tip #9

Avoid using the vehicles' Air Conditioning system unnecessarily. You should only use it sparingly as this system places the engine under increased stress; therefore, it has to work harder to power, or to 'drive' the air conditioning system which increases the amount of fuel required - in some instances by upwards of 20 per cent (20%). Simply open a window where possible instead, particularly at lower speeds.

This same advice would be relevant when deciding to use any unnecessary electrical power, such as mobile phone chargers, audio systems etc.

Furthermore, it pays to be choosy where you park your vehicle on particularly hot days. Try to park in a shaded area where possible as excessive heat from the sun on the vehicle over an extended period of time can actually cause the fuel in both your engine and fuel tank to evaporate.

Tip #10

Plan your journey. Doing so will allow you to choose the shortest route to your intended destination and reduces the possibility of getting lost. Using a road map or satnav (Satellite Navigation System) can aid you in this.

Tip#11

Finally, it's certainly worth taking the time to research a few websites to find out where to buy the least expensive fuel currently available within your area. Keep in mind that the further you travel to buy your fuel (unless you're passing there anyway!), the less value the 'less expensive' fuel becomes.

So there you have it!

These are just some of the useful adjustments that we can all make as modern day drivers. By implementing even just one of the above suggestions, you will be helping in a small way to preserve the environment whilst also saving yourself a decent amount of money at the fuel pump!

Best wishes and 'Safe Driving for Life'

Chris Chambers DSA ADI
Owner / Proprietor | Chris Chambers School of Motoring

