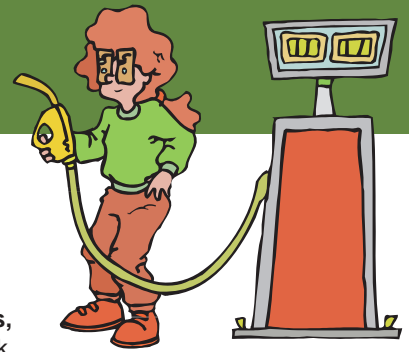


Keeping petrol costs down



Frugal fuel facts to help you get more value for money next time you fill up the tank!

Drive smoothly: Aggressive driving is both expensive and dangerous. To conserve fuel, avoid rapid acceleration and operate the accelerator as smoothly as possible. A relaxed driving style can save up to 40%.

Moderate your speed: To save fuel and arrive alive. Driving at no more than 100km per hour compared to 110km per hour saves fuel.

Plan ahead: Combine multiple household tasks and chores into a single trip. Plan when you could walk, cycle or use public transport instead of taking the car. Invest time in organising shared rides.

Don't drive: Especially on short trips, it is important to ask 'is this necessary?' Perhaps a bike would be more suitable for the journey, or you could get a lift with a friend. Saving money on petrol requires a rethink of attitudes and values.

Do not let your tank empty: This forces you into the nearest petrol station and you cannot hold out for cheaper prices. A Motormouth spokeswoman said 'In Sydney for the past four weeks the cheapest prices have been on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. It looks like they rise on a Friday'.

Use public transport: Wherever possible leave the car at home, especially to and from work, so you avoid sitting in peak hour traffic needlessly.

Keep your coupons: Supermarket chains offer coupons that give a discount of four cents per litre. Keep these in your car and use them.

Lighten the load: Remove unnecessary items, including roof racks, from your vehicle to avoid excessive drag. If you have two vehicles, use the smallest vehicle that will do the job.

Service checks: Check tyre pressure and uneven tyre wear once a month. Do not over-adjust the brakes, this can cause drag. Low tyre pressures increase fuel consumption by 3%.

High octane fuel: Higher fuel prices mean higher octane fuel is becoming better value for money. Many modern cars get better mileage on premium so it may cost less money per kilometre. Test your car to find out which is cheapest.

Avoid idling: Modern cars do not need to 'warm up', so avoid idling and switch off when you are parked, even if you are waiting for someone.

Minimise air conditioning: Park your vehicle in the shade where possible and buy a sun shield for your windscreen. Air conditioning increases fuel consumption by up to 11%.

Walking the kids to school

By waking up 15 minutes earlier in the mornings, we have time to walk the kids to school rather than drive. With the current rising petrol prices, we save about \$10 each week. Walking to school gives me time to chat with the kids and have some very nice conversations and really learn about what is going on at school and in their social lives.

Beware 4c off petrol

Don't get sucked into the 'four cents a litre off petrol' when buying at Woolworth's and Coles! I have shopped at both and found they are getting more and more expensive, unless items are on sale price. I worked out the petrol savings they offer amount to a measly \$2.00 per week, which is about \$104 per year on a 55 litre tank. Instead, I shop at Aldi, where I save at least \$1.00 on all groceries - or more than \$1400 a year! Many people think that the four cents a litre off petrol is a great thing, but that money spent at Aldi will fill your trolley faster and save you more money in the long run.

Contributed by: Stella Norberti

Searching for cheaper fuel

Don't drive out of your way to find a petrol station that will give you a discount, as it may cost you more to drive there than you will save.

Contributed by: Brook McBride

Testing cheaper fuel

Be careful of the cheapo service stations. Some petrol stations dilute down their fuel so they can appear better value. So each time you try a new petrol station listen for new engine noises and record how many kilometres you were able to travel on the tank so you can compare it to other petrol stations.

Convert your car to gas and save

We converted our ute to gas a few months ago. It cost \$1980 and we got \$500 back from the government within two weeks. I initially worked out it would pay for itself within eight months (based on gas at 40c per litre), however this will be even sooner as gas is often priced as low as 28c per litre. We do a lot of kilometres living outside the metro area and commuting daily. You can also have a full tank of both gas and petrol, so no worries about running out on long trips!

Contributed by: Lindy Alac

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