

# AUTO EXPERTS



AW1363240

## A little effort will be rewarded

A car that is treated well will repay its owner with lower running costs and a better resale price. Some attention now could make all the difference in a few years.

It's easy to spot a car that's well cared for. For starters, there's very little dirt and grime on the paintwork, and the interior isn't littered with last week's snack wrappers and empty bottles.

But there's a lot more to caring for a car than the obvious cosmetic duties. Here a few tips that may take up a little time in the short-term but will end up saving you time - and money - in the longer term.

### GET A SERVICE

It sounds obvious but in the rush to holidays - and with the mortgage reaching stratospheric levels - many people don't make a fresh jug of oil and some new filters a top priority. And, to be fair, it can be tricky to actually get your car booked in at this time of year. But now's the time to book your car in for the four-wheeled equivalent of a day spa. A proper tune-up and overall check-up can not only ensure your log books are up to date (crucial for good resale) but also ensure your car is running at its optimum.

### WASH AND WAX

Road grime, bugs, tree sap and bird poo can not only make your car look thousands of dollars cheaper but they can also eat away at the paint and cause long-term damage. A basic wash should only take 15 minutes or so, or another five if you can be



Under pressure ... It is essential to check the air in your tyres at least once a month.

bothered drying it with a chamois. Better still, treat it to a proper wax (yes, you'll need to get out the elbow grease to apply and properly polish it), which provides the sort of protection that can keep some of those nasties away from the paint itself. Regular waxing (at least every six months or so) will keep your car looking like new.

### CHECK THE TYRES

Tyres are one of the most important elements on any car, providing the only contact between it and the road, so it's crucial they're up to the task. One of the most important elements is the tyre pressure, something that will naturally decrease over time. Underinflated tyres are difficult to spot unless they're almost entirely flat, yet they can adversely affect

the handling and road holding of your car and increase fuel use. It only takes a few minutes to check and adjust and should be something you do at least once a month - don't forget the spare.

### FIX THE LITTLE THINGS

Few cars are in tip-top shape once they've got a few kilometres on the clock. A cracked light or blown globe may be a minor inconvenience but it could also render your car unroadworthy, potentially attracting a fine. But the cost of a globe is generally pretty cheap and there's no better time than now to attend to it. Similarly, a minor parking ding that may have chipped the paint may not look too bad now but it could be gearing up to rust, creating a bigger problem down the track.

### GO FOR A LONG DRIVE

Believe it or not, cars like to be driven and it's not bad to get the engine all hot and bothered and stretch its legs once in a while. Repeated short trips to and from work don't give the engine much of a chance to get up to its operating temperature and clean itself out (moisture in the oil can be one issue), so a decent trip can give it a chance to open up.

### GIVE IT A TANK OF PREMIUM

While many performance cars and European vehicles call for premium unleaded all the time, most cars don't. With the extra cleaning additives included in the premium unleaded blend, the occasional tank is a good way to give your engine a spring clean.

### EMPTY THE BOOT

Extra weight in your car has to be moved, which means putting a tiny bit more fuel in the engine to make it happen. Shed those kilograms and you'll save some money at the bowser, while also improving the performance of your car - albeit only fractionally.

### BUY SOME FLOOR MATS

Floor mats are one of the best ways to keep muck and grime off your car's carpet, while also keeping it looking close to new.

### CHECK WINDSCREEN WIPERS

Replacement wiper blades only cost a few dollars and can make the world of difference on wet days. They're relatively easy to slide on yourself (or a mechanic shouldn't charge much). While you're at it, check the washer fluid.

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# AUTO EXPERTS



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Follow the rules ... Letting your rego run out is a definite no-no when it comes to selling your car.

## Think ahead for a better resale

It pays to spend some time and effort on your car before you sell it — and you should start the minute you buy it.

When you're walking down the aisle, you're not thinking about the divorce settlement.

It's the same when you're buying a car.

The adrenalin's coursing through your veins, the salesman is applying the blowtorch and you're not thinking rationally.

But if you don't want your relationship with your car to end in tears, you have to start thinking about selling it the minute you enter the dealership.

That includes the colour you choose - orange may be fashionable this year but it's not a perennial favourite.

Sadly, the adage about a car losing a large chunk of its value the instant it leaves the dealership is true.

But you can stem the bleeding by making good choices along the way.

Whether you decide to sell privately or trade in, there are golden rules for selling your car.

### GET YOUR BOOK STAMPED

It may sound simple but it is one of the best things you can do to protect the value of your car. Servicing it according to the manufacturer's schedule is a must. Make sure you're given an itemised receipt of the work done. Detailed paperwork and a stamped service book gives a would-be buyer peace of mind.

### WASH IT REGULARLY

Don't neglect the weekend car wash. Dull or damaged paintwork will hurt the value of your car. At sale time, give the engine bay a

good clean. It gives the impression the car has been well looked after.

### CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS

Ticking the right options boxes can make a big difference at sale time. Picking a cheaper model and adding extras may save you a few dollars when you buy the car but it won't help come resale time because options depreciate at twice the rate of the car.

**You may love big, shiny gangster-style alloy wheels but they're unlikely to help you at resale time.**

### FIX IT QUICK

It may not be scientifically proven but new cars attract dents. It's almost inevitable that something will go wrong with your car at some point. Just how bad it becomes depends on how quickly you deal with it.

### LOOK AFTER THE INTERIOR

There's no point keeping the exterior pristine if the inside looks like a dump.

Looking after the seat trim and dash surfaces is just as important as washing the paintwork. Vacuum the seats and floors and don't forget the boot.

### MAINTAIN TYRES

They don't call the buying process "kicking tyres" for nothing. Even if prospective buyers know nothing about cars, you can be guaranteed they will check the tyres.

### BIN THE BLING

Remember that your tastes may not be what buyers are after. You may love big, shiny gangster-style alloy wheels but they're unlikely to help you at resale time.

Stick to the factory alloys and they'll retain their value better than aftermarket ones.

### GO MELLOW, NOT YELLOW

Car companies like to offer bright, or "hero", colours to help attract attention to new models. But while you may love that lairy yellow or vivid purple in the brochure, don't rush in and order it.

Choose a popular colour and you'll be glad you let your head rule your heart at resale time.

### GOOD PHOTOS

If selling privately, the right photos will influence how long it takes to sell the vehicle and how much people are willing to pay. Make sure you show a front, back, side, front and rear three-quarters, interior, under the bonnet and in the boot. It lets people know what to expect and shows you've got nothing to hide.

### 10 THINGS NOT TO DO WHEN SELLING YOUR CAR

- ✗ Let the registration lapse. No rego will drastically cut the number of people interested in your car.
- ✗ Carry your pets in your car. Pet smells, slobber and dog hair are big turn-offs.
- ✗ Park under trees or power lines. Sap and bird droppings are paint strippers.
- ✗ Smoke in your car. It's impossible to rid a car of cigarette smoke.
- ✗ Use automatic car washes. They can scratch paint. Use a do-it-yourself wash bay instead.
- ✗ Use non-genuine parts or an unlicensed mechanic. It will void any warranty.
- ✗ Modify your vehicle with after-market parts. Leave the car design to the experts or suffer at sale time.
- ✗ Lie about the car's condition to potential buyers. They'll only be disappointed and annoyed, especially if they've come a long way to see the car.
- ✗ Buy a car without a documented history. Even if you service the car regularly when you get it, incomplete log books will turn buyers away.
- ✗ Ignore problems when they arise. Scratches can become rust and leaks can lead to major failures.

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