

CARRENTALS.CO.UK DRIVING TIPS SERIES - No. 4 Car Maintenance Tips

A well-kept motor will not only look after you when you need it most, but is also less likely to surprise you with huge repair bills. Here car hire price comparator Carrentals.co.uk, looks at the top car maintenance tips you need to follow to keep your car running smoothly:

- **Check the Oil** - Check the level of oil in the car's engine at least once a week, preferably when the engine is cold and the car is on a level surface. If you need to top it up, make sure that you use the right oil, and the same that is already in the engine – the owner's manual should give you these details.
- **Lighting** - Check your lights regularly as they need to be properly focused, with the correct bulbs, for your own and oncoming vehicles' safety
- **Tyre Maintenance** - For your car to run at optimum efficiency, you need to make sure that all the tyres have the required air pressure. Recommended pressures are listed in the owner's manual but these are for cold tyres, so do not check them after a long drive. You should also make sure that the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm.
- **Water Levels** - Insufficient water and anti-freeze in the car's cooling system will cause serious and expensive damage. Check the water level when the car is cold – if it is below maximum, top it up with a mixture of two-thirds water to one-third anti-freeze. Add a little bit of anti-freeze all year round because it prevents rusting as well as protecting the engine in winter.
- **Braking** - Check your brakes regularly so that you can spot a problem before it is too late. If your handbrake takes more than a few clicks to hold the car on a hill, you should get it checked over by an authorised service centre. Keep your eyes peeled for signs of water marks on the pedals or carpet as this could indicate a brake fluid leak

- **Listen and Learn** - Always listen carefully to your engine for signs of a problem. If it sounds rough or you can hear a blowing sound, the exhaust may have a leak and you will have to get it repaired.
- **Shock Resistant** - Shock absorbers should also be checked regularly to avoid more serious damage in an accident. Simply press down on each corner of the vehicle and if the shock absorbers are working, the car will quickly settle back into position. If it bounces, the shock absorber on that corner may need replacing.
- **Preparation** - In addition to the standard kit that comes with your car (spare tyre, car jack, etc.) there are a few simple tools that are worth keeping to hand in your boot - tyre pressure gauge, screwdrivers, spanners or a basic socket set, pliers and a clean cloth.
- **Emergency Kit** - even after all these regular checks it is still possible to break down so put together an emergency kit to prepare for the worst, especially if you are going on a long journey. The kit should include a mobile phone, warning triangle, set of spare bulbs, first aid kit, fire extinguisher, bottle of water, spare fuses, tow rope, torch, travel rugs and a map.

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