

Car Repair Tips



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Andrew Stratton is a jack of all trades. He is one of those guys that just knows a lot about everything. Andrew graduated from college with a degree in Biological Engineering and Philosophy. He is genuinely curious about the world around him and loves spreading his knowledge.

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Car Repair and Maintenance Basics

Aside from a home, a car is typically the most expensive purchase an individual will make. By taking the time to keep up on the regular maintenance and any car repair procedures that inevitable come along with such a purchase, owners better their chances of being able to hold onto their investment and keep costs to a minimum. In this article, we will outline a few basic car repair and maintenance tips you can do on your own to help you along the way.

Step 1 – It may seem like a hassle, but it's always a smart idea to read your owner's manual. This guide will help to enlighten you to the specifics of how frequently you should replace and refill various fluids, how often maintenance is required, and various other topics that will help you with your vehicle ownership. Things like oil changes, brake fluid levels and antifreeze replacements are just some of the topics covered throughout the manual. Often, there may be reference to some light car repair operations that most people are capable of doing on their own. If nothing else, you should make yourself aware of how often maintenance should be performed in order to avoid expensive car repair in the future.

Step 2 – If you're looking for instructions pertaining to a certain type of maintenance project or repair, you might decide to purchase a manual specifically for your vehicle model. While these manuals can be quite handy, it should be noted that they are generally not geared toward beginners. However, at the very least, they will provide you with a better perspective and understanding of what you will be looking for. Beginner maintenance includes projects like oil changes, air filter replacement, spark plug replacement, fluid refilling and tire pressure levels. If you can get this far, you're already a step ahead of most car owners.

Step 3 – Know when to stop. Working on a vehicle can prove itself quite dangerous and is not something which should be toyed with by those who are unsure of themselves. Vehicles should be maintained and repaired on flat ground, with blocks to keep them from moving. Additionally, the engine should be allowed to cool for a period of at least several hours prior to engaging in any type of work. Keep gloves within reach and be careful where you decide to stick your fingers, making certain you don't allow yourself to get stuck.

Step 4 – The right tools are a necessity for any project, and automobile work is no exception. While the initial investment may prove itself a little expensive, the correct tools will make the job easier, less time consuming and will actually save you money in the long run.

Step 5 – If you're really interested in learning about car repair, make a commitment to a class. Most community colleges will offer beginner's courses in car maintenance and repair. In these classes, you can gain a first hand knowledge of the correct techniques and tools to use when vehicle work is required.

If you find something that's over your head, there's never any shame in simply taking it in to the professionals. Find a local car shop with a solid reputation and take your vehicle in to find out the necessary steps to take. Not only will you save yourself a bit of time and ensure your safety, but by speaking with the mechanic providing the work, you just might learn a thing or two for next time.

How To Get A Car Repair Estimate

If you're like most people, you view your car as a tool of freedom; with the power and ability to transport you to and from any destination you please. Whether a newer model or a polished classic, a car is and always has been one of man's true passions... until something goes wrong. When the dreaded day arrives when you must come to terms with the unexpected expense associated with a car repair, you should know that there are options available to you to help minimize your stress and lower the overall costs. In this article, we will provide a few tips to help you save money and get yourself back out on the road.

Step 1 – To begin, start asking around to friends and relatives in the area in hopes of obtaining a referral. There are quite a few ways to get scammed or overcharged by car repair shops, but by choosing to head somewhere with a solid reputation for quality work and fair prices, you can easily eliminate added stress and expenses caused by unnecessary repairs.

Step 2 – Find a car repair center that does not charge for estimates and ask for a list of problems with the vehicle. Once you have a good idea of what requires attention, you can use the information to compare prices with other shops in order to obtain the best possible price.

Step 3 – Once you have your estimate, find yourself at least three additional shops to compare costs. If each estimate is roughly the same, then there's a good chance that the rates you are receiving are in the right ballpark. If the prices are a little more scattered, it might be worth your while to try out a few other places.

Step 4 – Get yourself a summarized estimate of the service expenses. This list should include any replacement parts, labor, miscellaneous items, flat fees and a complete summary of the charges. Labor costs are calculated by the amount on hours required to repair the vehicle multiplied by the hourly rate of the mechanic.

Step 5 – Get your estimate in writing. While an estimate is not a guarantee of where the charges will be once the project is completed, due to potential issues unforeseen prior, the end expense should be roughly around the same amount. If you find that the bill is looking much higher than the estimate amount, you can always plead your case with the shop manager in hopes of resolving the issue in a satisfactory manner.

Above all, it's important to keep in mind that the shop you end up choosing for your car repair work should be one which instills a feeling of confidence and honesty throughout the estimate process. Avoid letting yourself be pressured into a repair or situation which makes you feel uneasy or insecure. Go with your gut and take the time to find a mechanic who makes you feel genuinely confident in their abilities. Not only will you save yourself a bit of added stress and possibly some cash, but you will have someone to turn to the next time something goes wrong.

Car Repair: Making An Appointment

When you make an appointment for car repair, it isn't like making a doctor's appointment. It doesn't mean that at the exact time, your vehicle will be examined. What it does mean is that you are going to be coming in and talking to a professional at that time about the issues that you are having and what can be done to remedy them. Many people that skip making an appointment can end up frustrated because they aren't running through the system smoothly.

Choose a Convenient Time

Because you don't know exactly what your vehicle will need, you may not know how long it is going to take. Try to choose a time that will work well for you. Is there a day that you drive less? Is there a time that will fit into your day? If you have these details in mind when you call, you will be able to tell them when you would like to come in.

Call the Shop

Call the number of the local shop and let them know that you need to make an appointment for a car repair. They will ask you questions about the vehicle and what types of problems you have noticed lately. Do the best that you can to answer questions accurately. The more information that you give, the better able the technician will be to diagnose your concern. Also, if you need any maintenance done, consider asking if it is possible to have it handled at the same time. While you may be without transportation for a little longer, it will save you from making a separate appointment and coming back in.

Prepare Your Vehicle

When you drop the vehicle off for the car repair, you want to make sure that most of your personal items are removed. Anything such as CDs, electronics, or any other items of value that you keep inside are best to just take out. If there is a lot of clutter, be sure to remove it so that a technician can easily get it and out of it. Before you drive up, it is a good idea to have everything that you will need packed up and ready for you to remove when you exit the vehicle.

The Day of the Appointment

Arrive a little early for your car repair appointment. Because other customers are going to be there and there is usually a lot going on, if you come a little bit earlier, you aren't going to feel as rushed. Grab the belongings that you will need and meet with the person responsible for writing up your car. They will want to write down some of the important information including the VIN number, the miles on the odometer as well as the condition of the exterior.

Be sure that you have arranged for some type of transportation from the shop. If you don't think that the visit is going to take long, you can always wait and bring something to work on. Don't have much to do? Consider turning the wait into something relaxing. Bring some music to listen to or you can pull out a book that you have been meaning to read in the waiting room.

Car Repair: Know the Maintenance Required to Avoid Major Issues

Spending money on car repair is not a pleasant prospect for most people, but the good news is that this can usually be avoided by keeping your vehicle maintained at all times. Keeping up with the maintenance can help prevent it from ever getting bad enough to warrant spending hundreds or thousands of dollars on repairs. Below, you can find out the most common types of services that can help keep your automobile in good shape.

Getting regular oil changes is one of the most basic ways to avoid major car repair costs. Check your auto's manual to find out exactly how many miles you are supposed to go before getting the oil changed, though you will find that it is usually best to get it changed every 3000 miles. Of course, between changes you should check to make sure that there is still oil in the vehicle. Otherwise, you could face major engine issues down the road.

Another important aspect to pay attention to is your tires. You need to make sure that they always have the proper amount of air in them, as driving on them with too little air can destroy them, while putting too much air in them can cause a blowout while driving. You should also check the tread to make sure it is still there, as too little tread can cause tires to slip on the road and not stop as effectively as they should. They also need to be balanced and rotated every once in a while to allow you to have a smooth ride when driving. You can have this done when you get the oil changed to help ensure that it is completed periodically.

One type of maintenance that you may not remember until it rains is to keep your windshield wiper blades in good shape. You actually need to replace these occasionally or else they will not be very effective, making it difficult to see when you drive. You can buy your own, or request that they be replaced during any other service at your local car repair shop.

Many people dread going to the car repair shop because it costs them money, but the sad fact is that the longer you wait to do it, the more you will usually pay. Keeping your vehicle updated on its maintenance can save you a lot of money and worry since you will always know that your vehicle is in good working order. Therefore, keeping it up-to-date is well worth the periodic costs.

Oil Change - Reasons To Maintain Your Engine

Our vehicles take a beating just about every day. We drive to and from work, pick up kids, run errands, and go out on the weekends. No matter the time of year, there is no fluctuation in the temperature of your engine and the oil inside of it is still slowing burning up. This is a crucial element to this part of your automobile, as it needs to stay properly lubricated at all times. Included below is some further information regarding this important method of auto maintenance.

Oil constantly burns as we drive and simply adding fresh lubricant bought from a store is not good enough for your car's motor. Over time, the oil inside will turn black and accumulate dirt and other debris. After a while this will likely clog your engine and can lead to permanent damage. Once this fluid is contaminated, it can lead to some serious problems. To properly address the problem, a full oil change is necessary.

As most people are either too busy or do not want to be bothered with performing an oil change themselves, auto shops constantly serve thousands of customers every day with this problem. Since this is such a commonly requested service of mechanics, discounts or special deals are frequently offered at local shops. If you would like to find out if an oil change can be taken care of at a cheap price, call your preferred car servicing location and ask if there are any coupons currently being offered. For those who have some form of a web presence – be it a Facebook, Twitter, or a proper website – you may be able to just print a coupon at your leisure and have it honored in the shop.

For most vehicles in mild climate regions, a vehicle should have its oil changed out about every 3,000 miles. If you live in an area that is particularly dirty or dusty, you will want to take care of this task more frequently. Do not delay, as this should not take long, especially if the mechanic is not very busy. This is a simple, inexpensive, and crucial service, so forgetting to keep up with it can lead to some serious setbacks.

No one wants his or her car's engine to totally break. This is a possibility if there is significant negligence in this area. You could be stranded in the middle of nowhere, and depending on the local climate at the time of the malfunction, you could be in for a rough time. If you keep up with maintenance, be it through an oil change or some other form, you can reduce the risk of total failure.

Depending on whether you are an aggressive driver and drive in a lot of stop and go traffic, you will want to check your fluid level and regularly top it off as needed. This style of driving will necessitate changing out the engine oil more often than average drivers would need to. In addition, if towing heavy loads or frequently making a lot of short trips, this discipline is also recommended.

Do the right thing for your vehicle and have its oil swapped out for clean, fresh lubricant on a regular basis. Keep an eye on the mileage sticker to know when the next visit to the mechanic is due, and you will be fine. This is an easy and affordable task for just about every automobile owner, so if you have not had this done in a while, call up your trusted auto shop today and ask about special deals.

Brake Repair-Common Brake Problems

A brake repair is something that should be placed high on your priority list. It can mean the difference between being safe in your car or not being safe. Here we look at two common problems that often occur to brakes- wear on the brake pads and warped rotors.

If your brakes are in need of some work then do not neglect them. Brakes are an essential element of the safety of your motor vehicle. In fact they are the most important part of keeping yourself safe on the road as well as your passengers. For that reason brake repair is a very integral aspect of maintenance for any motor vehicle.

There are certain problems that are common when it comes to brakes. The first is wear on the brake pads and the second is warped rotors. Let us look at these two much needed brake repairs.

The braking system takes a lot of beating on a regular basis. The more often a car is driven the worse it is. In particular the brake pads end up the worse for wear. For this very reason it is a smart idea to have the pads on your brakes checked out at least once every six months. In this way you are performing preventative maintenance on them and are being proactive. This is better than waiting until the pads are worn down and are starting to cause problems for you.

The symptoms to look for that signal a brake repair is needed for the brake pads include grinding sounds, squeaking and increased stopping distance. Most brake pads are fitted with a thin metal tab that lets you know when the brake pads need attention. It will do this by vibrating against the rotor once the pads have reached a point where they are very dangerous.

Not all brake pads are made this way however which means that having them inspected at least twice a year is strongly recommended. If the brake pads wear down enough in time they can do damage to the rotors. This brake repair will be even more expensive than if you had just needed to replace the brake pads!

Warped rotors is a problem more commonly seen in modern cars but this issue can crop up on all braking systems that feature disc brakes. Rotors can warp if the wheel is tightened too much or if they become overheated.

You will know that you have a warped rotor when you are driving because when you apply the brake you will feel a pulsing sensation. Not only can this pulsing sensation be frustrating to have to contend with but it can also be a red light for danger. A tremendous number of newer motor vehicles are made with rotors that are paper thin and are susceptible to warping very quickly.

Another thing that can make this problem worse is that many automobile manufacturers do not leave enough material in place to allow for the rotors to be resurfaced. This brake repair must be done by a qualified technician. When a rotor is resurfaced the flatness of the rotor is improved upon and the pulsing feeling in the brake pedal then goes away. The safety of the brake is then restored to what it should be. If your car needs work done on the brakes then get it done right away. Delaying a repair could be very dangerous

Car Repair Payment: Balancing Your Vehicle's Needs With Your Budget

When it comes time to pay for a car repair, you might be a little concerned. Before you panic, take the time to find out all of the different options for that you have and figure out which one will be most beneficial. In fact, there may be a way that you can take something positive from the situation.

Find Out About the Facility's Payment Options

Before bringing your vehicle in, contact the car repair shop and ask about some of the options that they have when it comes to paying for their services. Some will take all types of credit cards and a few will still accept personal checks. You don't want to be stuck with a bill that you don't have the means to pay. Rarely, a company may offer some type of financing options for customers. Remember, this is an important step to take before you go in for the car repair.

Prioritize

When you are at the shop, you may find that your vehicle needs more than one item fixed or replaced. In this case, take the time to figure out which is the most important. If you need a battery, this is going to be a priority because the vehicle will not run without it. However, you may need to have something in the air conditioner

replaced as well. In this case, consider living without the air conditioner until you can acquire money at more convenient time.

Payment Benefits

Do you have a card that offers you bonus points for making purchases? What about a debit card that awards you points or gift cards when you use it like a credit card? For each of these, you can charge the cost of your repairs and get some type of benefit. You have to pay the bill no matter what, so you might as well make sure that there some incentive to you.

Also, if you have a large bill, consider paying cash. Most companies are charged a percentage of a sale if a customer uses any type of credit card. Talk to a manager if you are paying cash and see if you can get a percentage off your bill. Remember, this decision will vary from location to location.

Consider an Extended Warranty Plan

Are you frustrated with the rising cost of your car's repairs? If so, you may want to look into an extended warranty plan. Here you pay a monthly fee or a large upfront cost, but certain common problems are covered. With this type of plan, you may be responsible for some of the cost or none at all. Over time, this type of policy can save you and your family money.

Like most events in life, it is always a good idea to plan your car repair in advance. Take the time to examine all of your options and find the one that works best for you, the service shop and your current financial situation.