

DriveWise

Driving efficiently

Fuel costs have been soaring through the roof in recent times, and one of the ways to alleviate its effects is by driving more efficiently. Efficiency-driving is also better for your vehicle, as it leads to less wear and tear of the mechanical parts. Here are six tips that will help in increasing the fuel efficiency of your car.

- By Dhruv Paliwal



Tyre pressure

If the air pressure in your tyres is below the recommended level, it can be deformed, while in motion. As the tyre deforms, and its contact patch with the ground increases in size, drag increases, and engine must do more work to rotate it. This directly impacts the fuel efficiency of a vehicle. A carmaker always offers different tyre pressure rating for different load capacities, depending on if you are driving alone, or with a full load. Following the prescribed tyre pressure rating will help you extract the maximum possible efficiency from your engine.

Accelerate and brake smoothly

How we increase and decrease the speed of a vehicle also plays a major role in the fuel efficiency that it returns. Accelerating hard will get you up to speed faster, but it will also make your driving more erratic and vehicle consuming more fuel. Instead, when you are building up speed, it's always ideal to accelerate gradually. The same principle applies to braking as well. Studies have shown that harsher braking often leads to a lower fuel efficiency. Not that braking is directly linked with fuel efficiency, it is more about the driving style in general.



Drive with the windows up

This one holds true if you are doing highway speeds. At lower speeds, the aerodynamic forces acting on the car are negligible and hardly make a difference. However, as speed rises, the weight of air passing over the car increases, and if your windows are rolled down, it can disrupt the flow of the air over the car. This causes engine to do more work as the car is experiencing increased drag, which in turn reduces fuel efficiency. While the A/C also impacts fuel efficiency, it is more efficient than driving with the windows down.

Don't carry unnecessary weight

If you lug around unnecessary weight in your car, you are asking it to do more work than it needs to, and this consumes extra fuel. If you have a lot of junk lying around in your or on your rear seats, this might be a good time to examine if you really need to carry it around all the time. While removing a few kilos won't drastically up your fuel efficiency in one day, it will play a small role every day and will help you be more efficient in the long run.



Turn off the engine at red lights

If you end up at a red light with more than 20 seconds remaining for the lights to turn green, it's better to turn off your engine. Now, obviously, if it's scorching hot outside and you want the A/C to be on. However, at times when you don't need the A/C, turning off your engine will save you valuable fuel.

Drive behind a larger vehicle

This is one of those points that will have you chasing every last bit of fuel efficiency. When you are driving on the highway, you should drive behind a larger car or vehicle. This way, they will be clearing the air in front of you, meaning that your aerodynamic drag will be reduced, which will increase your fuel efficiency. This, however, only works at highway speeds.

