

## Maintain car value over the long-term

When shopping for a new car, savvy buyers know finding the right car involves more than just finding the most comfortable or flashy vehicle. Numerous factors, including resale value, determine what makes a car the right car for a particular buyer. Various websites and automotive resources rank vehicles based on their potential resale value, and drivers can do much to ensure their cars and trucks maintain that resale value over the long-term.

• Pay attention to the exterior. Much like homes with strong curb appeal can help homeowners get the best price, vehicles that look good can make strong first impressions on prospective buyers. Take care of any dings or dents on the car before putting it on the market, and make sure the car gets a thorough washing and waxing prior to showcasing it for potential buyers.

Upon purchasing new vehicles, drivers with their minds on maintaining resale values can park their cars or trucks in garages as often as possible to protect them from the elements.

• Protect the interior. A well-maintained interior will impress buyers on

multiple levels. Pre-owned buyers may feel more comfortable buying cars with well-maintained interiors that still make them feel as if they're buying a new vehicle. Avoid eating in the car, and immediately address any spills or stains. When taking the vehicle to a car wash, spend the extra money to have the interior cleaned as well. Seat covers can help protect cloth and leather interiors from spills, stains and cracking.

• Keep maintenance receipts. Another way to maintain resale value is to keep all maintenance receipts from the moment the vehicle is purchased. Pre-owned vehicle buyers are making substantial investments when buying preowned cars, and many will want to be certain they're investing in the right cars and trucks. Documentation with regards to the vehicle's maintenance can assuage any fears buyers may have and help sellers get the most money possible when putting their cars on the market.

Maintaining resale value is a concern for new car buyers who want to get the best returns on their automotive investments. — Metro

# Cycle of spring



*Tire maintenance a key component of spring check-up*

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When warm weather arrives, many people enjoy a collective sigh of relief. Just as people welcome the end of the cold, snow and ice, cars and trucks also can benefit from more moderate temperatures.

Salt, grime and pot holes can take a toll on tires over the course of a typical winter. Drivers will not get far this spring and summer without tires in good repair, which is why tire maintenance should be part of any seasonal repair checklist.

### Inflation levels

Now is the time to use a tire pressure gauge to see if tires are at the ideal inflation levels. Many tires indicate the recommended PSI (pounds per square inch) on their sidewalls. Cold temperatures may cause tires to deflate a little. Esurance states that winter weather

can cause tire pressure reduction at about one PSI for every 10 degrees the temperature drops. Driving on improperly inflated tires can be dangerous, potentially affecting handling and braking distances.

Check tires when they are cold for the most accurate reading. Properly inflated tires also will improve fuel economy, so drivers may even save a little money by inflating their tires.

### Tire rotation/realignment

Examine the tires for tread wear. Any uneven or abnormal tread wear could indicate that the tires need to be rotated and the wheels realigned at the very least. Take the vehicle to a qualified mechanic to get their opinion on how to remedy the situation. Mechanics may recommend rotating tires every 6,000 to 8,000 miles, or about every six months for

the average driver.

Wheel realignment may be necessary after a season of driving over potholes and other irregularities in the road. Misaligned wheels can cause handling problems, like the car "pulling" to one side.

### Tire replacement

Drivers may discover extreme tread wear, bulges or even cracks in the sidewall during a tire inspection. These signs indicate that it's time to replace the tires. Failing to replace old, worn down tires can increase the risk of automobile accidents.

### Thorough cleaning

Once tires are inspected and possibly serviced or replaced, treat the car or truck to a washing and thorough detailing. This will help tires shine and get the vehicle road-ready for spring trips.

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## Riders must emphasize safety on the open road

Motorcycle enthusiasts in locales with cold winters may anticipate the warmer weather of spring and summer more than others, as it means they can pull their bikes out of their garages and get back on the open road. While riding a motorcycle can be an exhilarating experience, the U.S. Highway Safety Authority notes that fatal crashes are much more likely to occur to motorcycle riders than automobile drivers. As the number of drivers and riders on the road continues to increase, it has never been more important for riders to practice motorcycle safety.

### Be seen and heard

Ever wonder why some motorcycles make so much noise? It's to attract the attention of other motorists. Failure of other motorists to see motorcycles on the road is a chief contributor to collisions involving motorcycles.

One of the more comprehensive studies on motorcycle accidents showed most motorcycle accidents involve a short trip associated with shopping, errands, friends, entertainment or recreation, and the accident is most likely to occur within close proximity to the rider's home.

Accident involvement is significantly reduced by the use of motorcycle headlamps, including during daylight hours, and the wearing of highly visible clothing, including yellow, orange, green or bright red jackets.



COURTESY PHOTO

The study underscores the importance of remaining visible on the road. While leather and denim may be the traditional uniform of motorcycle riding, synthetic materials that have reflective fabrics can improve visibility.

Riders also can add reflectivity to existing gear with reflective tape.

### Use the right gear

When a rider is on the open road, he or she doesn't have the protection of a car frame to offer a buffer between the rider and the pavement should an accident occur. That is why it is crucial to invest in quality gear that can offer a certain measure of protection. A high-quality helmet that fits well is an important piece of safety equipment, as head and neck injuries can result in paralysis or fatalities. Pair the hel-

met with goggles or glasses with safety lenses. Durable nonslip gloves will help riders maintain a good grip on the handlebars, and boots can cover the ankles.

Although it can be tempting to forgo long pants or jackets when the weather warms, doing so can lead to painful abrasions and road burn should a fall occur. Invest in a leather jacket and pants or a high-quality, durable and bright-colored material.

### Additional precautions

Knowing this information can help riders make more informed choices on the road:

- Exercise extreme caution at intersections and only go through when safe.
- Test the lights, brakes and turn signals before you make any trip.
- Make sure the fuel and oil levels are at the correct levels.
- Know your bike's limits.
- Follow the speed limit and the rules of the road, and do not weave in and out of traffic.
- Don't ride in blind spots, staying in spots where you are most visible to fellow motorists.
- Always use turn signals.
- Do not tailgate, as stopping distances for motorcycles, especially on slippery roads, can make stopping difficult.
- Never drink and ride.

Emphasizing motorcycle safety can make for an injury-free riding season. — Metro