

# *Preventative Maintenance For a Used Car*



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If you own a used car, or if you're in the process of researching your next used car, then you've certainly heard about the importance of preventative maintenance.

The very definition of a used car is that it's already spent some time on the road. Some used cars have even spent a lot of time on the road.

With that in mind, it's crucial that you make preventative maintenance a priority. That way, you can ensure that your vehicle is in the best shape possible; you can take care of any minor issues before they become major problems.

Our team wrote this informative eBook for drivers just like you. Don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions.

## Benefits of Preventative Maintenance

Here's a brief overview of just a few of the many benefits of preventative auto maintenance...

- **Longevity:** If you take care of the little things before they turn into big things, then you'll save yourself from lots of stress and hassle down the road. By keeping your used car sufficiently well-maintained, you can greatly extend its lifespan.
- **Efficiency:** When everything on a car is working properly, it tends to run a lot smoother. And when it runs smoother, it tends to operate more efficiently. Therefore, preventative maintenance could help your used car ease up at the pump.
- **Cost-effectiveness:** Consider the previous two factors: longevity and efficiency. The longer you drive your car, the longer you can wait until you put money toward a new one. And, the more efficient your car is, the less money you'll have to spend at the gas station. Thus, preventative maintenance might just help you pad your wallet, too! And who doesn't appreciate a little extra spending money in their pocket?
- **Safety:** Last, but certainly not least, there's safety. It doesn't get any simpler than this: A well-maintained vehicle is a safer vehicle, especially when it comes to pre-owned models. Should you plan on driving your children, your family, and your friends around, then this ought to be on the forefront of your mind. They deserve a chance at a happy, healthy, and long life, and so do you!

Now that we've gotten that out of the way, let's dive into some of the most useful preventative maintenance best practices. Here's a closer look at 10 of them...



### 1. Perform Your Own Inspection.

Whether you're just looking at a particular used car for the first time, or you've owned it for years, it can't hurt to give it the ol' once-over yourself. Check for anything out of the ordinary. We're talking about lights, tire pressure, tread depth, weird engine noises, etc. Use your common sense and your best judgement. If you notice anything suspicious, take your vehicle to a professional immediately.

### 2. Check Your Own Fluids.

Which fluids are we talking about here? Antifreeze, power steering, coolant, and wiper fluid, among others. Depending on the specific make, model, year, and fluid, you can either view the tank level directly, read a gauge, or examine a dipstick. If it turns out that you're running low, you could add more or change it yourself. However, don't be embarrassed if you'd prefer to bring it to a nearby body shop.

### 3. Replace Your Timing Belts and Serpentine Belts.

Most timing belts require a replacement approximately every 60,000 miles, and most serpentine belts require a replacement about every 40,000 miles. Disclaimer: These are just estimates! Your owner's manual can tell you precisely what to do with your vehicle. This is a step that you really want to pay attention to. Your entire car could break down should either of these belts snap. A professional service technician can tell you more.

### 4. Get an Oil Change.

Engine oil is the grease that lubricates your automobile's moving parts. This lubrication both prevents expedited wear and safeguards against total engine failure. There are several ways to tell if your car is due for an oil change...

- **Dashboard indicator:** Watch out for the oil change icon.
- **Oil dipstick:** Manually check to see if it's too low.
- **Oil consistency:** Keep an eye out if it's black and gritty.



#### 5. Check the Battery: Clean the Contacts.

Corrosion can sometimes cause lead-acid car batteries to leak. It's imperative that you're aware of this. If you find any mineral buildup around the battery's contacts (also called terminals or posts), you can clean it off with a battery cleaning brush and some baking soda. Warning: While doing so, you must keep metal tools and jewelry away from the battery, and you should never touch the positive and negative terminals at the same time.

#### 6. Replace the Windshield Wipers.

This is a step that you can probably do on your own, as it's pretty simple. Yet, there's no need to feel ashamed if you'd prefer the steady hand of a pro. Once your windshield wipers start to leave streaks on the glass, they've gotta go. Swapping them out for new ones is cheap, easy, and quick. Plus, road visibility should take precedence over a host of other issues!

#### 7. Replace the Cabin Air Filter.

There's nothing quite as disheartening as having to breathe stale or musty air for the duration of a cross-country road trip—or for the duration of a quick drive into the city, for that matter. That's where your cabin air filter comes into play. Please, people, keep it up to date. Your friends will thank you. Your children will thank you. Your lungs might even thank you!

#### 8. Replace the Engine Air Filter.

Over time, your engine air filter will get clogged with debris, dust, pollen, and more. This is to prevent these contaminants from actually entering your engine! But, once your filter is clogged, your engine won't be able to get the clean air that it needs; this will adversely affect performance and efficiency. On many models, the engine air filter is notoriously difficult to access. You know what's coming next: Call a pro!

#### 9. Rotate and Balance Your Tires: Check Your Alignment.

Well-executed tire rotation, balance, and alignment will ensure that their treads wear evenly, and that you experience a seamless ride. It's much cheaper for a trained mechanic to rotate, balance, and align your tires than for you to go out and purchase new ones. So, take the easier, softer way, and schedule a tire appointment as soon as necessary. You'll thank yourself in the long run!



## 10. Change Your Spark Plugs.

Here's a general rule of thumb: Copper spark plugs need to be changed every 30,000 miles, while certain Iridium spark plugs can last up to 100,000 miles! You want to stay on top of this seemingly small task, as it can yield large consequences when ignored. If your spark plugs wear out, your engine won't work correctly. At best, this will lead to a few inefficiencies. At worst, it can lead to a complete engine failure.

### Pro Tip: Consult the Manufacturer's Maintenance Schedule.

Perhaps the best way to carry out preventative maintenance on your sedan, coupe, hatchback, truck, minivan, crossover, SUV, or other model is to check its owner's manual.

Within the owner's manual, you'll find a helpful maintenance schedule that'll let you know exactly when it's time to bring it to a professional.

However, you must keep in mind that your used car has already been around the block once or twice. In other words, it probably has a few years under its belt and a few thousand miles on its odometer.

You can't forget this! You need to count both years and miles from when your automobile first hit the road, not from when you started to drive it!

### Pro Tip: Let an Expert Inspect Your Used Car.

If you really want to care for your ride the way that you should, we have one piece of advice that stands out from all the rest: Let an expert do the job!

Auto mechanics and service technicians are professionals for a reason. Many of them have either years or decades of experience working in the field.



In plain English, they do preventative used car maintenance like nobody else! Regardless of what your situation requires, from fluid checks and oil changes to tire rotations and belt replacements, they've got you covered.

They'll do their job courteously. They'll do their job efficiently. And they'll do their job effectively. What more could you ask for?

## Contact Us Today with Any Questions

We encourage you to drop us a line if you have any questions. Our courteous representatives know just about everything there is to know about preventative maintenance for used cars. Best of all, they'd love to talk to you about it.

We've created three simple ways for you to reach us. First, you can call us on the phone. Next, you can chat with us on our website. Finally, you can stop by our brick-and-mortar location.

Of course, you can do more than simply talk to one of our team members. Let's say you're ready to have some preventative maintenance work done on your pre-owned automobile. You can schedule an appointment with our expert automotive technicians, and they'll have the thing running in top shape as soon as possible.

You can get a hold of us through one of the three channels mentioned above to schedule your exclusive service appointment today.

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