

Summer Auto Maintenance Checklist

Get ready for those road trips!

Summer is a good time to catch up on auto maintenance.

You've got your suntan lotion, a giant cooler and three cheap novels -- you're ready for a summer road trip.

You may be prepared, but are you up to date on your summer auto maintenance? Sure, auto maintenance is the last thing on your mind, but it'll jump to the front pretty quickly if you're on the side of the road.

Spend an afternoon on some simple auto maintenance procedures and you'll thank yourself in the end.

Radiator Flush: The coolant in your radiator doesn't last forever. Over time it can break down and start to corrode the inside of your radiator. This can lead to cooling problems and radiator repair. A radiator flush once a year is cheap insurance against radiator repairs.

Replace Your Air Filter: You should replace your air filter twice a year, so now's a good time to get that 5-minute job out of the way.

Tire Checks: Summer traveling could mean driving in the rain. The tread on your tires must be adequate for rainy weather or you could end up in a ditch, or worse. Checking the tread depth on your tires take one minute. While you're at it, you should check your tire pressure, too.

Replace Your Windshield Wipers: Winter weather can be brutal to your windshield wipers, making them almost useless if you get caught in a summer rain shower. Replace them at the beginning of the summer and you won't have to worry.

Inspect Your Brakes: It's a good idea to inspect your brakes twice a year just to be sure everything is up t snuff. Car safety should always be a top priority. Go ahead and check your brake fluid while you're at it.

Check Your Battery: Corrosion is very likely to build up during winter weather driving. Check your battery posts and cables to ensure you'll have no starting problems.

Check Your Headlights: Sometimes you don't notice that you have a bulb out. Now's a good time to take a look to see if you need to replace a headlight bulb. Not only is it unsafe to drive with one headlight, you can get a ticket!

Remember that car safety begins with you. It also ends with you, since you're the one driving the car. That means not doing anything stupid like speeding or driving drunk. Do all of us a favor and skip those dangerous activities.