

# Tighten Your Belt —It's Time To Cash In

Drive better, save more money? Yes really, apparently—we got the intel from the experts on how making tiny tweaks to your driving habits and routine can be kinder to your wallet, your car (and fuel gauge) *and* the environment in the long run.

*By Yi-Hwa Hanna*



37,935 hours: That's how much time, according to calculations based off a study performed by the Harvard Health Watch, an average Joe (or Jane) in the USA spends driving a car in a lifetime—or if you're going to put that in more relatable terms, 101 minutes a day. Now consider the fact that here in the Middle East, we do seem to spend an extraordinary amount of time in our cars and on the road—reports also show that for every two people in Dubai, there is one car, which means that there's an extremely high level of vehicle density in this region, even when compared to other urban centres and hubs. And aside from the health concerns that might come along with spending that much time sat in traffic, it also means that a fair amount of our paycheck goes towards our transportation costs. When you're trying to save cash, your driving habits aren't necessarily the first thing that come to mind (yeah, we'd say cutting back on shopping, being a little smarter with shopping for groceries, eating out less, and not going out as often are



probably more common go-tos) but you'd be surprised at how much making little tweaks to the vehicular aspect of your life can help. It makes sense—if transportation plays that much of a role in your life, then even the slightest changes could add up to significant savings in the long run, and the best part? You won't even notice. So we turned to the experts at General Motors and Chevrolet for a little help. Here, Abdallah Madhoun, Regional Sales & Marketing Manager for Chevrolet Middle East shares

his tips on saving fuel—which isn't just good for your wallet, but the environment too. Score.

- Take it easy and drive smoothly. Not accelerating smoothly is one of the most common mistakes drivers make on the road. Driving aggressively, by jumping on the gas at every light only to hit the brakes at the next, won't get you home any faster. And according to Chevrolet engineers, driving smoothly improves your mileage by approximately 20 percent.

- Use cruise control. Using cruise control helps maintain a constant speed over time, which is much more efficient than speeding up and slowing down over and over again. Whenever you're on a straight stretch of road, switch on the cruise control and bask in the great fuel economy!

- Roll up the windows. Leaving windows open on the highway increases air pressure in your car, acting like a parachute trying to slow the vehicle down. This makes your car



**Cruise control is** *much more efficient than speeding up and slowing down over and over—switch it on and* **bask in the fuel economy!** /



recommended cold tyre pressure for your vehicle.

- Don't ignore the "check engine" light. A "check engine" light can be something as simple as a loose gas cap. But, a more serious engine problem can cut fuel economy by up to 40 percent—not to mention, it can be a safety hazard. When it comes to this dashboard indicator, you're always better safe than sorry!

- Avoid excess idling. Think about it this way: Your car gets 0 kpl when the engine is idling. And the amount of fuel you burn can really add up, so turn off your engine when your vehicle is parked and cut costs with fewer fill-ups.

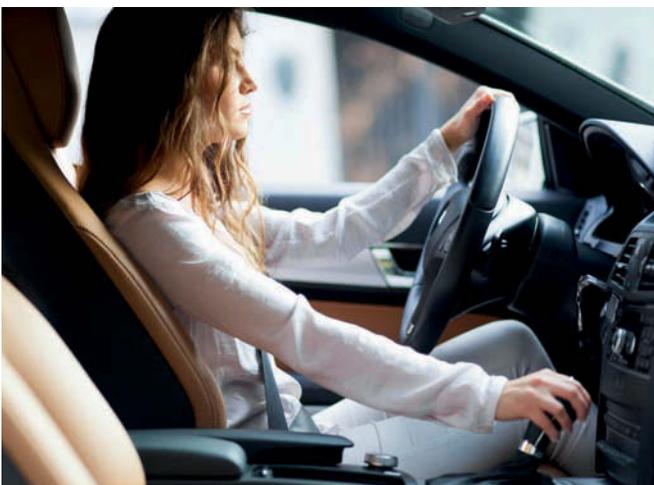
- Remove the roof carriers and car ornaments. Roof carriers to haul gear and car ornaments like country flags increases aerodynamic drag (wind resistance), which lowers fuel economy. At highway speeds, up to a third of your fuel is used to overcome wind resistance; even small changes to your vehicle's aerodynamics will have a big impact on fuel usage.

- Cut down on excess weight: This isn't just a summertime goal for a beach-ready body! When it comes to saving on gas, carrying heavy items in your car makes it work harder, so it consumes more gas. Keep in mind that for every 100 kg you carry on board, your car uses about 0.5 L/100 km more gas (around 2 percent extra)—and even more in smaller vehicles.

Keep these smart driving tricks in mind and the benefits will just add up—one piece of small change at a time! ■

consume much more energy than the air conditioner will, so do your wallet (and your hairstyle) a favour by keeping the windows up when you can.

- Check tyre pressure. Even if your tyres are just five pounds under the recommended air pressure, the engine will have to work harder to turn the wheels. Chevrolet recommends checking your tires at least once a month—the Tyre Information Label located on the inside of your vehicle's doorframe has the



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