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6 Must-Do Annual Car Maintenance Tips

Admit it; some of us get by doing the absolute minimum on our cars. However, as smart, savvy women, it's important says Anne Fleming, Car Buying Advocate and President of Women-Drivers.com, that we follow these 6 absolute-must maintenance tips so that your car stays in tip-top shape.

1. **Maintain your oil.** If you don't properly maintain the oil levels, the engine can overheat and even blow up. Have your oil checked every three months or three thousand miles. Just like going to your stylist, it's a must do.
2. **Check your tires.** A good trick to check the tread on your tires is to stick a penny in between the tread. If you can see the top of Lincoln's head, the tires are worn down and it's time for new ones! Make sure that you are always checking your air pressure as well -once a week is ideal. Properly inflated tires will give you much better gas mileage.
3. **Check your windshield wipers for wear.** If they are worn down in poor condition, you could be at risk for a serious safety hazard during the next downpour.¹
4. **Check your coolant level.** Your coolant is something that your engine can't live without. This is something that you can DIY. Review your owner's manual to determine where the coolant reservoir is. Wait until your engine is cool and take a look at it - the outside should have 'low' and 'high' markings on it and the level of coolant inside should be between the two.²
5. **Check your engine belts.** Have your engine belts checked every year or two, and replace them at every 50,000 miles. The belts live in the front of your engine and loop around various pulleys, fueling everything from the alternator to the air conditioner compressor. Rubber perishes, especially in the extreme conditions of an engine bay. Make sure that your service provider is checking these yearly.³

¹ Edmonds.com, 2009

² Squidoo, 2009

³ Squidoo, 2009

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Contact 412.327.2604 to schedule Anne Fleming for an interview. Learn more at www.women-drivers.com.

6. **Review your insurance policy.** While Insurance.com reports that 68% of women have no traffic violations versus 64% of men, chances are we will all use our insurance several times over the life of our car. Shop around for insurance policies the same way that you shop around for shoes. Keep in mind that companies will give you discounts for safety devices such as airbags, anti lock brakes and even a clean driving record. Consider changing your deductible from \$250 to \$500 (or, even \$1,000) and ask your agent to show you how much money you will save. Then, spend the money you save on that pair of shoes or the down payment to this year's Roth IRA.

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