

Wheels: A question from Bob says, “I have oil related questions and some comments. I just bought a 2006 Toyota Highlander with the 2.4 engine. I have always done all my own maintenance and that includes the easiest one, oil changes. I have always used mineral oil. I now want to switch to synthetic. Should I go a certain mileage using mineral oil to allow the parts to seat in and then switch to synthetic? Does Toyota use some special kind of break-in oil from the factory or is it just ordinary mineral oil? How soon on the first change? How many miles before the switch? Wait for the first oil change? I have always changed at 5000 miles; steady freeway driving all the time. Make the first one sooner? Are all synthetics created equal? Recommend one over another? I've always used Castrol with good results. What about Mobil 1?”

Halderman: Regarding the oil change question and switching to synthetic; most experts recommend waiting until at least the first oil change at 5,000 miles. I changed to synthetic after the second oil change at about 10,000 miles and noticed (mental or real?) a slight (about 1 mpg) increase in fuel economy after the switch. The improvement could also be due to the fact that the engine was fully broken in at that time.

Which synthetic? All synthetics are not the same; I use Mobil 1 and the reason is that this is the only synthetic that is used by vehicle manufacturers in some new vehicles such as the Corvette, Viper and several others.

Which oil filter to use? Tests that I have read show that the performance of the filter can vary but that for the most part the most important thing is that it be changed regularly. I use the factory filter purchased at a dealer but I have used several different brands without any concerns. Just be sure that the size and the threads are correct for your engine.

