

April is car care month and this an excellent time of the year to get your vehicles ready for spring and summer driving.

Things that can be done yourself to take care of your vehicle include:

1. **Wash the vehicle inside and out.** This means cleaning the wheels and tires as well as the body and especially the glass. Use a glass cleaner and a microfiber cloth and clean both the inside and the outside of all of the glass. You will be amazed at how much haze and dirt will come off and how much better you can see especially at night when the windows are clean. If you want to spend more time, try using a glass polish to really make the glass shine. Want to get by without spending money? Try using old newspapers and windshield washer fluid to clean the windows. The newspaper is porous and helps clean the grime off the windows and the windshield washer fluid contains a small amount of alcohol that helps cut through the dirt and road film.
2. **Wax or polish the vehicle.** Wax protects paint, which is used to protect the steel, so by applying wax, you are protecting the finish of the vehicle. Besides a shiny vehicle always seems to run better than a dull vehicle. Want that really shiny appearance? Try using a clay bar product before waxing to remove road film and embedded dirt that is often found on the surface even after it has been washed. Clay bar can be purchased at most automotive parts stores or anywhere wax and polish are sold. Spray a small section with a spray-type polish or water from a spray bottle, and then just rub the clay lightly over the surface. The paint will feel smooth as glass after this is done and will provide a clean surface for the wax, resulting in a higher shine without too much additional work.
3. **Check the tires.** Check the tires for proper inflation pressure. The proper pressure for your tires is on a placard on the driver's door. Do not forget to check the spare tire. Check the condition of the tires and the tread depth. If the tread is worn to less than 2/32 inch, the tires should be replaced. Many experts recommend that the tires be replaced if they have less than 4/32 inch of tread depth as wet traction really decreases when the tread is worn beyond that limit. Many vehicle manufacturers also recommend that tire be replaced that are older than six years old regardless of the tread depth remaining because rubber deteriorates over time.
4. **Change the engine oil.** Have the engine oil and oil filter replaced using the specified oil as indicated in the owner's manual or shown on the oil fill cap on the engine.
5. **Change the filters.** There are two filters that should be changed regularly. The engine filter and the cabin filter. The cabin filter is located behind the glove compartment or is accessed from under the hood on some vehicles.

Doing these things to your vehicle now will improve the appearance and the functionality of your vehicle and help extend its life too. Enjoy.

