

Scheduled Auto Maintenance: What Service Managers Don't Want You to Know.



Don't know a lot about your car? Don't worry... you're not alone.

When it comes to mechanical issues, most people rely on service recommendations from the technicians at their local dealership. But the problem is, believing solely in this solution can sometimes be expensive - because often, they offer you absolutely everything they can. And while there's something to be said about a thoughtful mechanic, it's important to know not all recommendations are required.

So, how can you determine what absolutely needs to be done? What's critical to your car? And what's just something you can consider?

Luckily, every owner's manual comes with a recommended maintenance schedule. And there are a few rules of thumb you can remember.

1. **Don't overdo the oil changes.** Still changing your oil every 3,000 miles? If your car uses synthetic oil, the recommendation is typically 6,000 miles or more. Or, if your message center tells you your oil life, you're safe until you fall to about 20 percent.
2. **Old school tune-ups are typically not needed on a car you've had for 10 years or less.** For example, spark plugs should last about 100,000 miles, and most cars no longer have points and rotors or traditional distributor caps that require attention.
3. **Your chassis isn't likely to need lubrication.** Unless you're driving an older model, it's highly unlikely this service is needed. And adding grease where it's not needed could damage your vehicle.
4. **Fluid flushes don't generally apply.** In fact, some manufacturers recommend against them. It might be best to reject the next recommendation, but be sure to see what your manual says.
5. **Filters do not need to be changed at every oil change.** Instead, ask the attendant to use

compressed air to blow out debris and wait to replace the filter at your next visit.

6. **Change the transmission fluid, but only according to your owner's manual.** Service technicians may tell you it's better to change it more frequently, such as every 50,000 miles instead of every 80,000 (or whatever your manufacturer recommends). But, doing so may be excessive, so be sure to consult your owner's manual.

So, find that manual and have it in hand the next time you stop for service. It could save you a bundle and let the maintenance service team know you have the necessary knowledge.

For more information about keeping your car in shape and your savings from taking a dent, talk to an agent. Find one near you.