

THE ONLY VACCINE YOUR VEHICLE NEEDS IS CULTIVATED MAINTENANCE

#PerceptivelyKeepingMyCarHealthy

Vehicle upkeep is important, even when they aren't in regular use Shahe Koulloukian of Mazvo Auto Care Center tells us what we need to know to stay road-ready.



FOR THE MAJORITY of us, COVID-19 has ground our normal activities to a halt – and along with our social lives, our time in the car has also diminished considerably. Even those of us who are still driving to and from work are finding that we're spending a lot less of our day on the road.

While we're at home, doing our best to stay safe, thoughts of automotive upkeep are understandably on the back burner, especially since we aren't driving as much. But we tend to forget that our vehicles still require care, and right now there are many little things that are making them more vulnerable to costly repairs ... and even crime.

There's no better time for all of us to get reacquainted with the basics of car ownership, and Shahe Koulloukian, owner of Mazvo Auto Care Center, has provided some crucial tips to help keep our cars in optimal health while we look after our own.

KEEP THE VEHICLE AWAKE, NOT

ASLEEP: Vehicles are designed to be driven and running. Parking at the airport for vacation is totally acceptable, but parking it for weeks (or months!) because of quarantine is not ideal. Tires, belts and hoses can dry rot and start cracking; oil and fluids can become acidic and break down, which is detrimental to the engine. Start your vehicle at least twice a week for 8-15 minutes of idle time to make sure the battery remains charged. Try to drive it around the neighborhood for least two

miles once a week to keep all the gears and components lubricated properly.

AVOID VIP PARKING: Parking in a shaded area is good, but not when the shade comes from a tree -- dry leaves, pollen, and bird droppings are going to destroy your vehicle's paint. Make sure to park in a shaded area if you can or at least get a car cover. Make sure to hand wash your vehicle at least once a week and dust it with a car mop/duster twice a week in between washes to help maintain the clear coat.

TOP IT OFF: When vehicles sit for a long time, seals and gaskets tend to dry rot and start leaking, and fluids evaporate in warm temperatures. This would be a great time to read that long-forgotten owner's manual to see the location and type of fluids your vehicle takes. Keep the level full to protect all your engine's vital components.

AIR IT OUT: The glues used for interior plastic and rubber, such as the dashboard and door panels, will secrete tiny fumes of chemicals that can fill your vehicle – and potentially stain the interior of all your windows. Make sure to crack all your windows a finger-width to keep the air flowing.

WIPE IT DOWN, PROPERLY: Yes, it's your vehicle and no one but you and your family uses it. Even so, consider how many things you touch, even during a quick trip to the grocery store. Your steering wheel, shifter, and inner and outer door handles are the

hot spots. Keep it simple and wipe down your vehicle at least twice a week, or when you have been on lots of errands or traveling with rest stops or carpooling. Cleaning solution doesn't need to be fancy; just make sure it contains isopropyl alcohol, as it's the safest for nearly every interior surface. This is a good lesson for all of us to make sure we stay clean as part of the new normal.

SAFEGUARD YOUR INFORMATION:

Automotive crime is up, likely due to more people sheltering in place. Cars that are sitting still and unattended for long periods of time are prime targets for larceny, and most dangerously, identity theft. You most likely keep repair and tire replacement receipts in your glove box that have your full name, address, phone number and email. Take them all out, organize them into a folder, and bring them inside until you're ready to drive again. Take out that garage door opener as well. Lastly, that easy access sticker that allows you to go in and out of gated communities can be photographed and printed, so you may also want to consider removing it until you're coming and going regularly again.

Our lifestyles have all been adjusted due to COVID-19, and in making those changes, we can't forget to include our vehicles. That way, when life returns to its usual level of back-and-forth, we can rest assured that our cars will be as healthy as we are.