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A Race Car Driver's Take on Preparing Your Car for Warmer Weather

IRVING, Texas--(BUSINESS WIRE)--

After a wet, snowy and cold winter for much of the United States, the warmer temperatures and softer weather of spring just can't come soon enough. Like a leading NASCAR driver eagerly awaiting the checkered flag, commuters in late winter can't wait for the morning they won't have to scrape ice from their windshield.

While NASCAR drivers may not deal with frozen pavement, they do know driving. With that in mind, we talked to Sam Hornish, Jr., current driver of the Sprint Cup Series #77 Mobil 1 Dodge and former three-time IndyCar Series Champion.

"At the track, we know we're dealing with extreme engine conditions," said Hornish Jr. "What the everyday driver might not realize is that daily commutes can also put a lot of stress on an engine."

When not racing, Hornish Jr. spends a lot of time under the hood, customizing cars as a hobby and collecting both classic and new automobiles. With that experience, he has some springtime tips to share with drivers.

"Just like my racing team does all it can to make sure my #77 Mobil 1 Dodge is running smooth before each race, you should do all you can to make sure your car is running smooth before each season," said Hornish.

Here are a few of Hornish's recommendations for making sure your car is ready for climbing temperatures:

1. Give your car a thorough washing -- All that dirt, grime and salt that built up over a winter of driving is horrible for your car's paint and undercarriage. Stop by your local car wash to protect your vehicle from rust and protect its resale value. Be sure to spray the underbody and underneath the bumpers (rear and front) to rinse away any salt build-up.
2. Check your wiper blades -- Remember how annoying it was to drive through blinding sleet with cracked and non-functioning windshield wiper blades? Well, your visibility will be even worse when the torrential downpours of April arrive. Make sure your wiper blades are up to the task.
3. Check your tires -- Hornish changes his race tires based on the track conditions, so you should do the same for your driving conditions. If you've been driving on winter tires, change them to all-season. If you don't, rotate your tires. At the very least, check your tire pressure to ensure proper inflation. Properly inflated tires will save you money on gas and decrease

tread wear.

4. Change your oil -- Hornish stresses that this is perhaps the most important advice he can give. Oil is the lifeblood of your engine, so he recommends using premium oil and changing it as recommended. He suggests a synthetic oil like Mobil 1, which is specifically designed to protect critical engine parts while optimizing your engine's efficiency and reducing oil consumption. (For more information about Mobil 1, go to www.mobil1.com.)
5. Check your brakes -- Just like Hornish needs to slam on his brakes to avoid other drivers, you've been hitting your brakes all winter to avoid icy patches and other hazards. If you hear grinding, squealing, screeching or chatter, get the brakes checked.
6. Apply a protectant -- As the sun begins to shine more, it will have more opportunity to crack and fade the vinyl on your seats and steering wheel. Wipe it down with some good spray protectant now to prevent ugly damage.
7. Check your AC -- Make sure you're prepared for the hotter and hotter days of spring by checking the vent temperature (pressure) of the cooling system with a vent thermometer-- available at auto part stores for less than \$10. The vent temperature should be 55 degrees or less. If it's not, schedule service now while the temperatures are bearable.

"Whether you're road-tripping to the track or just taking your kids to school, following these simple tips will ensure a less stressful drive and, most importantly, a safer drive," says Hornish.

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