

AutoMD.com Reveals Five Auto Repairs / Maintenance Tasks You Should Never Ignore

Company says recent AAA survey showing car owners putting off repairs alarming; could wind up costing car owners thousands down the road

CARSON, Calif., Sept. 7, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- AutoMD.com says a recent AAA survey(1) reporting that one in four car owners have neglected repairs and maintenance in the last twelve months is alarming, because ignoring preventative maintenance and/or failing to make minor [car repairs](#) today could mean thousands of dollars in auto repair bills tomorrow.

According to AutoMD.com, there are some simple, but important, repairs and maintenance tasks car owners can do on their own - or have a mechanic perform at an affordable price – before these minor fixes become major repairs.

To that end, the experts at AutoMD.com have compiled a list of five easy auto repairs/maintenance tasks car owners should never ignore – as well as outlining what neglecting these simple repairs could cost in the long run.

The Cost of Neglecting Simple Maintenance / Repairs

This chart highlights the average do-it-yourself and shop costs for five maintenance / minor auto repairs; the worst case outcome if you ignore those jobs, and what those worst case outcomes could end up costing(2).

Maintenance / Repair	DIY Cost	Shop Cost	Worst Case Repair	Worst Case Cost
Engine Oil and Filter Change	\$25	\$65	Engine Replacement	\$4,115
Change Transmission Fluid	\$42	\$202	Automatic Transmission Replacement	\$3,217
Replace Thermostat	\$30	\$117	Head Gasket Replacement	\$715
Rotate Tires	\$0	\$30	Tire Replacement	\$600
Replace Front Brake Pads	\$40	\$180	Brake Pad and Rotor Replacement	\$400

Five Auto Repairs and Maintenance Tasks You Should Never Ignore

Easy Repair #1: Engine Oil and Filter Change

When the engine is running, motor oil lubricates, cools, and seals critical internal engine components. That's why regularly checking the oil level, and changing the engine oil and filter, is an important part of overall vehicle maintenance. The oil level should be kept between the upper and lower levels on the dipstick to provide proper engine protection. Neglecting to change the oil and filter periodically will increase contaminants and shorten the engine life.

[How to check engine oil level](#)

[Learn how to change your engine oil and filter.](#)

Easy Repair #2: Automatic Transmission Fluid and Filter Change

Transmission fluid provides hydraulic power, and acts as a lubricant and cooling agent for the moving parts inside your car's transmission. The fluid level must be correct for the transmission to function properly. Transmission slipping may occur if the level is low, and damage to the transmission may occur from aeration if the level is too high. Fluid breakdown is the leading cause of transmission failure. Most manufacturers recommend changing the transmission fluid every 30,000 miles.

[Learn how to check and change transmission fluid.](#)

Easy Repair #3: Cooling System Repair and Maintenance

Checking the coolant level, mixture, and condition on a regular basis could prevent your car from breaking down on the road. Coolant/antifreeze raises the boiling point and lowers the freezing point of the cooling system when mixed with distilled water. A 50/50 mixture is recommended for optimum performance. Neglecting the cooling system, or deciding to put off a repair like a thermostat replacement, could cause the engine to overheat, and blow a head gasket.

[Learn how to check and fill your coolant.](#)

Easy Repair #4: Tire Pressure Check and Rotation

Be sure to check your vehicle's tire pressure on a regular basis and rotate your tires front-to-rear several times during their lifecycle to extend tire life and maximize your cost savings. Some car owners may try to get as much out of their tires as possible, even if that means driving on tires with little or no tread (bald). This can be extremely dangerous as bald tires can lose traction (hydroplane) on wet roads, which causes the driver to lose control of the vehicle. Check pressure and rotate your tires to save money, but don't ignore tires that need to be replaced.

[Learn how to check tire pressure.](#)

[Learn how to rotate tires.](#)

[AutoMD.com's Tire Care Tips](#)

Easy Repair #5: Replace front brake pads

The brake system is the most important safety feature on your vehicle, and the front brakes typically provide up to 70% of the braking power. The ability to stop your vehicle is critical when driving, and you cannot do that effectively if you have worn front brake pads. Furthermore, if you have ignored the brake light on your dash and the squealing sound when you apply the brakes, you could be dangerously close to scoring the front brake rotors, which can double the cost of a front brake job on most vehicles.

[How to replace brake pads](#)

[Learn how to perform a brake safety inspection.](#)

The AAA data that has the experts at [AutoMD.com](#) concerned suggests that while the current economy has people holding onto their vehicles for longer periods of time, car owners are putting off even minor repairs and maintenance.

- The AAA survey found that more than half of American drivers – 54 percent – said they don't want the financial burden of a new car, so they're keeping their older ones running (3).
- One in four drivers say they've neglected repairs and maintenance on their vehicles in the past year because of the slow economy, increasing the likelihood they'll face a major, costly repair (3).
- 28 percent of drivers could not afford a \$2,000 repair bill, while 18 percent say they could not pay a \$1,000 bill (3).
- The owner of an [auto service shop](#) in Delaware said that people who used to change their oil religiously at the three thousand mile mark are now five thousand mile oil changers. And five thousand mile oil changers are pushing the oil change envelope to seven, eight, even nine thousand miles (3).

[AutoMD.com](#) recommends that car owners who are faced with expensive repairs go online to check [auto repair price estimates](#), [negotiate price](#) with their repair shop and/or research local shop rates before giving up on a repair.

(1)AAA, One in four Americans Could Not Pay for Major Car Repair, According to AAA Survey, 8/3/2011: www.aaanewsroom.net/Main/Default.asp?CategoryID=4&ArticleID=867

(2)For the purposes of this analysis, repair pricing data highlighted below was derived from using the [AutoMD.com Auto Repair Estimate Tool](#) for a sample base model 2005 Toyota Camry in zip code 90746, home to the company's headquarters.

(3)AAA Survey results and mechanic quote as reported in USA Today, 8/10/2011, *Strapped Americans try to stretch car dollars*: http://www.usatoday.com/money/autos/2011-08-09-car-repair_n.htm

About [AutoMD.com](#)

AutoMD.com™ (www.automd.com), a wholly-owned subsidiary of US Auto Parts Network, Inc., (Nasdaq: PRTS), is the most comprehensive and unbiased free online automotive repair resource designed to empower car owners with the best way to repair their vehicles. Backed by a team of automotive data specialists and certified auto mechanics who are advocates for the car owner, AutoMD.com allows both car owners and DIYers to 1. Troubleshoot [car problems](#), 2. Know how much [auto repairs should cost](#), 3. Understand the steps needed and the time it should take with [How-to Auto Repair guides](#), 4. Find the right local [auto repair shop](#) at the right price for their issue, and 5. Get [auto repair questions](#) answered by the [AutoMD.com](#) community. [AutoMD.com](#) was named Best Automotive Website in the 8th annual American Business Awards, also known as the as the Stevie® Awards. AutoMD Mobile is available for the iPhone at [iTunes](#).

Contact:

Media Relations

Melanie Webber, mWEBB Communications, (424) 603-4340, melanie@mwebbcom.com

Angela Jacobson, mWEBB Communications, (714) 454-8776, angela@mwebbcom.com

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