

DIY auto maintenance tasks



During the global COVID-19 pandemic, many people looked for ways to save money. One way to live a frugal life is to take on more projects. In addition to lawn and garden upkeep and minor home improvements, a number of people may be able to tackle some auto repair and maintenance jobs themselves.

Performing routine vehicle maintenance tasks on one's own is an ideal way to reduce automotive expenditures. The following are several vehicle maintenance jobs skilled DIYers may be able to handle on their own.

- **Replace the air filter.** An air filter should be changed annually or more frequently if you reside in a dry, dusty climate. A clogged filter can stress the vehicle's air conditioning system and reduce heat capacity in the winter. Check the location of the air filter in the owner's manual; pay

attention to how it is placed before removing. Then replace it with a clean filter that can be purchased for around \$15.

- **Replace the wiper blades.** When wiper blades are worn out, visibility in rainy or snowy weather is reduced. Choose a quality wiper blade, as they usually are made with high-quality rubber, clean better and have more UV protection than manufacturer-provided blades. Follow the installation instructions on the package, and be sure to refer to the particular manufacturer's buying guide to get the right size for your make and model of vehicle.

- **Replace spark plugs.** The money management site Money Crashers says spark plugs need to be replaced after around 30,000 miles or as indicated by your owner's manual. Vehicles will have four, six or eight plugs, depending on how



many cylinders the car has. The plugs need to be changed in a certain order, so only remove the first wire and spark plug. Remove and replace plugs one by one with a spark plug socket, wrench or ratchet.

- **Change the oil and oil filter.** Because changing the oil in a vehicle requires jacking up the car or truck and getting a little dirty, some people prefer to leave it to an oil change center. However, at an estimated cost of \$20 versus nearly

double or more what you'll spend elsewhere, it can save money to do it yourself. Never change the oil while the engine is hot. And remember to lubricate the rubber gasket on the new oil filter and allocate enough oil to fill the filter with about $\frac{1}{2}$ of new oil in addition to what is put in the engine.

- **Replace headlight bulbs.** Replacing headlight bulbs is a fairly easy project and will only take around 10 minutes to do after you purchase the right bulbs for your vehicle. Each vehicle is different, but many bulbs are housed inside of a bulb holder, which is shaped like a trapezoid with three wires coming out of it, advises *U.S. News & World Report*. Remove the old bulb and put in the new. Plug the wires back in and test to see if the headlight works.

The above automotive tasks are just some that people can try themselves to save time and money.

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