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How to Change Your Car's Motor Oil

By Stephen Bucaro

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First, let's answer the question; Why should you change your own oil? Because you can save time and money. You don't have to wait in line at the service garage or quick oil change shop. For ten bucks you can get the best oil and a brand new oil filter. And, it's so easy to do that you could train a monkey to do it.

Changing your cars motor oil is a very simple three-step process: 1. Drain the old oil. 2. Replace the oil filter. 3. Add the new oil. But before we go through the steps, lets answer a few basic questions.

When should I change my oil?

Look in your cars owners manual. Most auto manufacturers recommend changing the motor oil every 6,000 miles for normal service, or every 3,000 miles for severe service. I change my oil every 6,000 miles, and my engines run like new when I trade my vehicles in with well over 100,000 miles on them. One thing that I do is change a new cars oil after the first 300 mile break-in period. Then, after that, I change the oil every 6,000 miles.

What kind of oil should I use?

You are not going to save money by using an off-brand oil because your engine will wear out sooner. Use oil that meets the American Petroleum Institute (API) classification SL. I use Valvoline, Quaker State, Pennzoil, or Havoline brand oil. These quality oils contain additives that make them work better and longer.

If you are changing your oil just before winter, use SAE 10W30 weight oil. This number means the oil will have a thin 10 weight viscosity when the engine is cold, helping the engine to start easier, and then the oil will thicken to 30 weight viscosity when the engine warms up, protecting the engine better. If you are changing oil just before summer, use SAE 10W40 weight oil. The extra 40 weight viscosity will

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protect your engine better when it's hot.

What's the First Step?

First let your engine cool off. Modern engines run at close to 300 degrees (F) and hot oil will definitely give you a severe burn. You shouldn't have to jack your car up unless you have some kind of ground hugging sports car or low rider. Almost all cars have enough space underneath to reach under and change the engine oil.

Step 1: Drain the old oil.

Locate the oil drain plug and place a pan under it to catch the oil. With a box wrench, remove the oil plug.

Note for newbies: To remove the drain plug, turn it counter-clockwise.

– If you have a GM dual-overhead-cam EcoTec engine you may have a difficult time locating the drain plug on all that aluminum.

When the oil stops draining, reinstall the drain plug.

Note for newbies: To replace the drain plug turn it clockwise. Start the plug with your fingers. If it seems even slightly hard to turn, back it out! You are crossing the threads.

Step 2. Replace the oil filter.

Move your oil catch pan under the oil filter. Using an oil filter wrench to get it started, remove the oil filter. (newbies: counter-clockwise, and you will get some oil on your hand.)

– A strap type oil filter wrench is the best kind to use. A socket type oil filter tool is used with a ratchet just like a regular socket. The problem with the socket type is that it tends to get stuck on the filter. Use the socket type tool if you don't have enough clearance around the oil filter to use the strap type.

With your finger put a thin coat of oil on the new filter's gasket to make it seal better.

*! Now pay attention – here's where you can screw up royal!

With your hand, install the new oil filter. If it seems even slightly hard to turn, back it out! You are crossing the threads. Most filters have an instruction printed on them to give the filter one more turn after the gasket has made contact.

Here's what I recommend: screw the filter on until its "hand tight". Then use the oil filter wrench to snug it up another 1/8 to 1/4 turn. This is critical!

When the vehicle is running, the oil pump puts the oil under pressure. If you don't install the oil filter

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tight enough, the oil will come gushing out. If that happens shut down the engine immediately! Without oil, an engine will lock up within seconds.

The first time I changed my oil, I used the filter wrench to tighten the filter as tight as I could get it. Wrong! The next time I went to change my oil, I couldn't get the filter off. Luckily I had plenty of room around the filter, so I hammered a screw driver through the body of the filter and used the handle of the screw driver to turn the filter off.

Warning! Don't over-tighten the filter. Follow the instructions above carefully!

– The GM dual-overhead-cam EcoTec engine has an unusual oil filter located on top of the engine. Remove the engine air intake hose. That's the oil filter canister just to the right of, and below, the end of the open air intake tube. Use a proper size wrench to remove the canister lid. This engine uses a special filter cartridge.

Step 3. Add the new oil.

Locate the oil filler cap on the valve cover. I've seen newbies pour motor oil in everything from the

master brake cylinder to the radiator cap. Make sure you have located the the oil filler cap. Remove the oil filler cap.

When pouring the oil, you would be wise to use a funnel between the oil can and the valve cover oil filler hole.

How much oil should you add? Look in your cars owner manual. Most engines have a capacity of four or five quarts. Don't overfill the crank case. When you run the engine the extra oil will be blown out through the PCV valve, possibly stalling your engine.

Tip: If you don't know the oil capacity of the engine, add four quarts, then check the oil level, if it's a quart low add another quart.

Replace the oil filler cap.

Step 4. Start the Engine.

Yes, I know, I said there where only three steps. You're finished, this is not really a "step".

Start the engine and make sure the oil warning light goes off. Look under the vehicle to make sure oil is not leaking out. Turn off the engine and let it set for a minute to let the oil drain down to the crank case. Then use the dip stick to check the oil level.

How to check the oil level: Remove the dip stick, wipe it clean with a rag, reinstall the dip stick. Make sure the dip stick is in all the way or you will get a false reading. After a few seconds remove the dip stick and examine how far up the stick is covered with oil. Most dip sticks have a "full" mark printed on

them.

Note: I find the best way to dispose of the old oil is to use a funnel to pore it from the collection pan into the bottles from which the new oil came. When I get a big pile of used oil bottles I bring them to the oil recycling center. Be sure to mark the used oil bottles so you don't accidentally think they are new oil.

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Stephen Bucaro

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AMSOIL Synthetic motor oil, the best in synthetics

By Sgt. Robert McGee /USMC

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AMSOIL was the first to make synthetic motor oils, and is the only company that recommends a 25,000 mile 1 year drain interval.

Since I have been using AMSOIL motor oil in my cars, I have noticed a real difference in their performance. My 1994 Nissan Sentra LE with 81,000 miles on it had a smoother idol and acceration, with a more quiet ride along with better gas mileage. I went from 32MPG to 34MPG!!! So far I have put 8,000 miles on my car's motor oil and it has never driven better.

I had my motor oil tested at an independent analysis lab and it turns out that my car's oil is cleaner than most Bottled water. Even after 6 months and 8,000 miles my car had no soot build up,no signs of breaking down, only 24 parts per million of iron deposits, my kinimatic viscosity Index at 100C dropped from a 11.7 to a 11.5 meaning that the oil had been virtually untouched.

To learn more visit my website

www.american-synthetic-oil.net

I am 24 years oil, I live in California I have been in the Marine Corps for 5 years now. I am an Avation Calibrator Metrology Tech. I own my own business as an AMSOIL Dealer.

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