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Why Hybrid Car Drivers Need Thick Skin

By Rick Hendershot

Buying a hybrid car is more than a calculated decision to save fuel. It is a statement about "saving the planet".

Even if the chances are pretty slim that hybrid technology will actually make much difference, it gives hybrid owners the right to feel superior. After all, they care about the planet. And the rest of the world obviously doesn't.

But if you're one of those hybrid owners you'd better be ready to lose some friends. Here's why...

1. You're Driving Way Too Slow

In theory at least, hybrid owners are the antithesis of those guys who just ache to get in that passing lane and leave the rest of us behind. You know the type...you're minding your own business coming out onto the expressway and the otherwise ordinary guy in the vehicle behind you swings out and passes even before you've hit the highway.

Hybrid owners seem to do just the opposite. You've known for years that driving slow saves fuel. So you're likely to be driving under the speed limit rather than over like the rest of the world.

The fact that you're driving a hybrid just makes it worse, since you know that all the potential savings are squandered if you try to go fast.

Especially when you're accelerating. That guy in the high powered vehicle who pulls out and passes... the thought of saving gas has never crossed his mind. But hybrid owners know better. For you it's a moral duty to save fuel. The fate of the planet depends on it. So there's no way you're going to try any of that fast acceleration stuff.

2. What's with the Pulse and Glide Stuff

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You've been told that "pulse and glide" can make a serious difference to your gas milage. That's where you accelerate (conservatively) to the speed limit, and then let the car "glide" to 10 or more miles per hour below the speed limit. Repeat this procedure. Repeat this procedure. Repeat this procedure...

I once had a friend who drove like this. I thought he was dozing off between pulses, but now I know differently. He was actually doing the environmentally responsible thing.

My friend's driving habits aside, this practice is not going to endear you to all the rest of the drivers who can't figure out why you keep slowing down. It's probably smart to speed up just a little when you find yourself in anything other than the "slow" lane.

All bets are off when they let you use the carpool lane.

3. You Just Won't Inch Forward Will You!

Everybody else in the world knows that you must "inch" forward during stop and go traffic. How else are you going to keep up with the driver in front. Besides, if you leave more than about a 15' gap between you and the guy ahead somebody's going to jump into the gap and slow you down even more.

Hybrid drivers have been told this "inching forward" stuff is pointless and wastes fuel. And the way they build hybrids these days they've got a point. When you take your foot off the brake pedal the auto-stop turns off and the gasoline engine restarts — like one of those gasoline engine golf carts. And there goes most of your gas savings. All those stops and starts just eat up the gas.

But don't expect your mono-drive cousins to understand. They've only got one thing in mind: to get wherever they're going just as fast as possible. And everybody knows that racing up behind the guy in front is the only way to make that happen.

4. Do you really think you should be drafting me like that?

The responsible hybrid owner will make use of every advantage to save gas. And drafting larger vehicles is one technique that the more aggressive will try. That's where you pull right up behind a semi, a van, or an SUV and try to stay in the pocket of air they are pulling along behind them.

I remember doing this with an old '65 Beetle a few years back. We were travelling along the New York Thruway drafting semis. We were making great time and saving lots of gas... until we blew a rod.

Of course, sticking on someone's bumper will not endear you to too many of your fellow drivers. And as I discovered, it's a bit dangerous too. You'll find yourself going quite a bit faster than you otherwise would go. And whipping along in that back-draft does not do a lot for your stability.

Just try to remember, when you're out there on the highway trying to save the planet, the rest of the world could care less about your morally superior driving habits. All they want to do is get where they're going as fast as they can.

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What Are Hybrid Cars?

By Dennis Conner

Hybrid plants like corn or rice are familiar to many but hybrid cars? Are these space-age cars that do not need fuel to run or even fly in the sky?

To the uninitiated, hybrid cars may seem like an alien form or specie that requires a lot of explaining. To car and environment aficionados, hybrid cars are either bane or boon especially with the increasing fuel prices worldwide.

Hybrid cars may just be the answer of modern scientists to the rising fuel cost and the deteriorating quality of the environment. Contrary to your belief, hybrid cars are no longer new to the society as the auto industry has come up with various models of hybrid cars. Car manufacturers who have been left behind in the race for the perfect hybrid car have announced their intention to compete in the market.

Hybrid vehicles are those that possess the dual qualities of being able to run on more than two sources of power like gasoline or battery. The first hybrid vehicles came in the form of hybrid bikes which has fuel features but can be operated using the pedal skills of the rider. Hybrid cars are more common in Europe particularly in Norway and France. Hybrid buses that are operated by overhead and by diesel when they travel in other areas without the overhead wires are also being used in Seattle. There are also hybrid submarines which run on nuclear, diesel or electric energy.

The most common hybrid vehicle is that powered by both gasoline and electricity. A hybrid car attempts to allow the owner to save on fuel while being environment friendly. However, can hybrid cars be efficient enough to provide long distance travel without being refueled or recharged?

Most gasoline-powered vehicles answer this requirement although they cause more damage to the environment because of the emissions. On the other hand, electric vehicles are more

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environment–friendly but can only go on a maximum of 161 kilometers until it is recharged and the recharging time is very slow. The hybrid car combines the advantages of both the gasoline–powered and the electric–powered car.

A hybrid car possesses a gasoline engine much like the ordinary gasoline powered car but the engine is much smaller, more environment–friendly due to lesser emissions and more efficient. It also possesses a very high tech electric motor which allows dual use of batteries and energy.

The hybrid car may just be in its infancy but the human mind can very well make sure that the hybrid cars will be the cars of the future.

The author is a regular contributor to Hybrid Headquarters

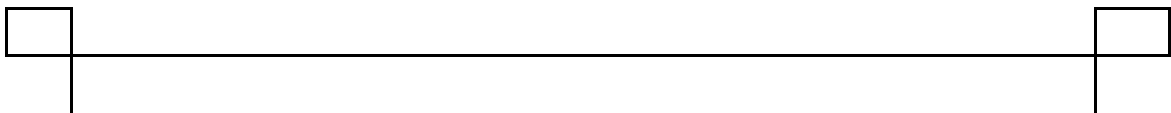
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hybrid car information is freely available.



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