

Car Maintenance Checklist

A checklist for keeping a car maintained on a regular schedule.

Monthly checks

- ☐ Check tire pressure on all four tires and the spare against the door-jamb sticker.
- ☐ Inspect tire tread depth and look for uneven wear, cuts or bulges.
- ☐ Test all exterior lights — headlights, brake lights, turn signals and reverse.
- ☐ Check windshield washer fluid and top up if low.
- ☐ Look under the car for new fluid leaks or stains.
A persistent leak should be diagnosed by a mechanic before it worsens.
- ☐ Listen for new noises from the brakes, suspension or engine.

Engine oil and fluids

- ☐ Check engine oil level and color with the dipstick on level ground.
- ☐ Change engine oil and the oil filter at the manufacturer's interval.
Use the oil grade and capacity specified in your owner's manual.
- ☐ Check engine coolant level in the reservoir when the engine is cold.
- ☐ Inspect brake fluid level and that it is the correct DOT grade.
- ☐ Check power steering and transmission fluid where applicable.
- ☐ Top up windshield washer fluid suited to the season.

Tires and wheels

- ☐ Rotate tires at the interval in your manual to even out wear.
- ☐ Have wheel alignment checked if the car pulls or tires wear unevenly.
- ☐ Have wheels balanced if you feel vibration at speed.
- ☐ Replace tires when tread reaches the wear bars or local legal limit.
- ☐ Confirm the spare is inflated and the jack and tools are present.
- ☐ Check valve caps are fitted and the TPMS warning light is off.

Brakes and suspension

- ☐ Have brake pads and rotors inspected for wear and scoring.
- ☐ Check for grinding, squealing or a soft brake pedal.
Any change in braking feel warrants prompt inspection by a mechanic.
- ☐ Verify the parking brake holds the car on a slope.
- ☐ Inspect shocks and struts for leaks or excessive bounce.
- ☐ Check for clunks or play in the steering and suspension.
- ☐ Confirm the ABS and brake warning lights are off.

Filters, belts and battery

- ☐ Replace the engine air filter at the manufacturer's interval.
- ☐ Replace the cabin air filter to keep airflow and demisting strong.
- ☐ Inspect drive belts for cracking, glazing or fraying.
- ☐ Check hoses for swelling, cracks or soft spots.
- ☐ Clean battery terminals and check for corrosion and secure mounting.
- ☐ Test battery health, especially before winter and after three years.

Seasonal and mileage milestones

- ☐ Replace wiper blades that streak or chatter, typically twice a year.
- ☐ Switch to appropriate tires and fluids ahead of winter or summer.
- ☐ Replace spark plugs at the manufacturer's specified mileage.
- ☐ Change the timing belt or chain by the interval — failure can wreck the engine.
This is a major service; follow the manual's mileage and use a qualified mechanic.
- ☐ Flush and replace coolant on the recommended schedule.
- ☐ Keep all service records and receipts to protect warranty and resale value.