

# When to do What?

It's difficult to keep track of all the maintenance work needed to keep our cars running smoothly. To help, TRW has created an info card for download as reference for when it's time to perform a routine check.

## Maintenance Routine Checklist

\*It's important to note that all these replacement time frames are influenced by driving and environmental factors.

### When to do What

**Air Filter:** Every 15,000-30,000 miles

The air filter determines how much airflow is provided to the engine. If the filter is not clean, elements under your hood can become polluted, causing your engine to misfire and not start as easily. Here are a few key indicators to tell whether it's time to look under your hood:

- Vibrating or slipping sound coming from the engine
- Misfiring
- Decreased fuel economy
- Smell of gasoline exiting the exhaust pipes
- Darkened air filter

**Battery Replacement:** Every 3-5 years on average

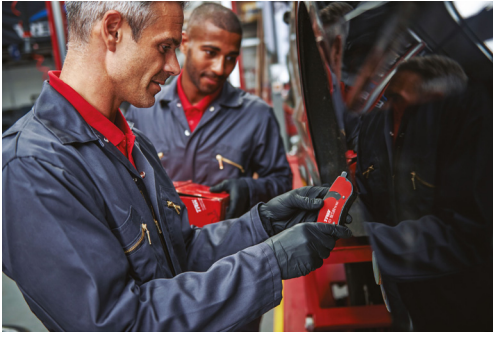
At some point, we've all either had to jump start our car battery, had someone else do it for us, or have seen a quick video of it. Even with the quick fix of a jump start, there is no telling just how long the charge will last in the battery. To avoid guesswork, pay attention to these low-battery signs so you don't end up stranded in the middle of nowhere:

- Engine is slow to start
- Egg-like smell coming from your battery
- Dim headlights
- Jump starting car multiple times a week

**Brake Pad Change:** Every 30,000 – 50,000 miles

Doesn't it feel like you just had your brake pads changed? Depending on your driving style, your brake pads can last a lot longer or shorter. Brake pads are a critical safety component, so if they aren't monitored closely, you risk stopping in time at that busy intersection. Here are some telltale signs to know it's time for a brake pad change:

- Constant screeching or squealing noise when pressing on your brakes
- Less than a quarter inch of brake pad
- Metal to metal grinding



**Brake Fluid:** Approximately every second brake job

The clearest sign that you need to change your brake fluid is during a complete brake failure – which, at that point, it's a little late. There are other ways your car will warn you that it's time for your brake fluid to be replaced or topped off.

- ABS light turns on
- Brakes become harder to press (need to top off fluid)
- Brakes become soft to press (time to replace fluid)
- Squealing and grinding

**Engine Oil:** Every 3,000 – 7,500 miles (check every month with dipstick)

The mileage recommendation for oil changes can range greatly – because cars nowadays range greatly. It's best to keep an eye on your oil through monthly checks of the dipstick or through your car's sensors if applicable. There are many moving parts to an engine and the engine oil's lubrication helps keep these parts working properly by reducing friction. Over time, engine oil deteriorates and needs to be changed to prevent damage. Maintain regular oil changes in order to maintain the life of your engine.

**Rotor Change:** Approximately 50,000 miles or with a brake pad change

Worn rotors heat up quickly and can't absorb and then spread the heat evenly, which affects your brake pads and causes accelerated pad wear. The heated rotors create rough spots that tear away at your brake pads faster, even if the pads are new. Your driving style makes a significant difference on how quickly your braking system wears down and paying attention to the small details will help you in the long run. Look out for:

- Steering wheel vibration when you slow down
- Screeching when you brake
- Blue-colored rotors



When your rotors are blue, it's time to replace them. This issue can be caused if you ride your brakes – meaning, you keep your brakes engaged by pressing on the pedal while driving.

**Shock and Strut Replacement:** Every 50,000 – 70,000 miles

When your smooth ride turns into a bumpy mountain, your shocks and struts are reaching their limit and can cause you to lose control of your vehicle – and have made that ride much less comfortable. Other signs of a needed shock and strut replacement are:

- Leaking fluid on the shocks/struts
- Tires unable to firmly grip on the road
- Decreased stopping power



**Tire Change:** Every 6 years or when tread depth is 2/32"

Many problems can arise if you do not replace your tires. Tires are a key safety component and driving on them past time of replacement puts you at risk of your tires blowing out on the road, uneven steering, and skidding when you need to brake quickly. The tread on your tires is a key indicator of whether you need new tires. Checking your tires monthly will help you better keep track of when a replacement is necessary. Check your tires for:

- Offset tread wear
- Abnormal bubbles in the siding
- Cracks all over the tires
- Steering wheel vibration

To test tire tread, an easy trick that's been around for years is by taking a penny and placing it upside down with the Lincoln side facing you. If you can see the top, or above, of Lincoln's head, it's time to have your tires replaced. If the tread is at least as deep as his forehead and you can't see his hair, your tires still have some wear left.

**Tire Rotation:** 6,000 - 8,000 miles or every 6 months

Uneven wear, regular vehicle vibration, and unexplained air pressure loss are all signs to get your tires rotated. Most of the weight in your car will be distributed to the front tires so when the front tires show wear beyond the wear of the back tires, it's time to rotate them and put the back tires in the front, and the front tires in the back. Once the front tires catch up, it will be time to replace all four.

**Transmission Oil:** 60,000-75,000 miles

Changing your transmission oil regularly helps increase the life of your transmission. Not changing your transmission oil can result in dirty fluid that will won't be able to lubricate effectively. It's best to change your transmission oil with every engine oil change, and change when your vehicle handbook advises. The lifetime of your oil is greatly influenced by driving and environmental factors. If you don't change your oil in the appropriate time frame, you risk your transmission overheating.

- Oil puddles under your car
- Difficulty shifting
- Slight burning smell
- Warning light on dashboard
- Roaring/revving when you accelerate or go around corners



**Wiper Blade Replacement:** 6 - 18 months (depending on use)

Driving in rain or snow with poor wiper blades is dangerous to you and everyone else on the road. Without full visibility, you become a hazard and limit your driving capabilities. You also risk damage to your windshield when using old wiper blades. When the rubber part of the blade is gone, the plastic and metal is open to scratch against your windshield glass. Replace your wiper blades as needed and you'll be good to go!