



MAINTAINING YOUR ICE VEHICLE'S HEALTH DURING LOCKDOWN

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If your vehicle is parked up for a long period of time, as it will be for most people across the UK during the pandemic lockdown, what is the best way to look after your vehicle? If left stationary for long periods of time, internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles can suffer some issues. Below we highlight some top tips for drivers to try and minimise any potential risk to your vehicle's health during periods of non-use.

Important:

Do not break the Government's lockdown rules to look after your car, please carry out any maintenance in line with regulations in line with regulations.

ICE health top tips:

- **Battery strength** - Without being used regularly, car batteries can lose charge meaning they may not have enough power to start the engine. The risk of weakened battery health is higher if your essential journeys are especially short. Our advice is to use your car for essential journeys to keep your battery healthy. Simply starting a car occasionally and leaving it running for only a few minutes isn't likely to help, in fact this may end up draining a weak battery. If you can drive the vehicle for 15-20 minutes within Government regulations this will, in most cases, be sufficient to top up the battery charge.
- **Check your tyres** - It's crucial to check both the condition and the pressure of your tyres before any journey. Check the pressure in each of your tyres before you drive. It's quite possible that tyre pressures

could have gone down if your car hasn't been used. You can check them yourself at home with a tyre pressure gauge or at your nearest filling station. If your tyres have lost pressure, you'll need to inflate them to the recommended levels outlined in your vehicle handbook, which will list the required pressures based on the sort of loads you expect to be carrying. You can use your own tyre pump or use those available at petrol and service stations.

- Check your levels – Whilst it's unlikely you will have used your car very much, you should still check things like engine oil, coolant, and whether all your lights are working properly. This should be done before you begin driving again on a regular basis. It's important to check your levels to reduce the chances of an unnecessary breakdown.
- Give your windows a wash - It's likely that your car has a layer of dust and pollen on the front windscreen. It's best to give your windscreen a quick wash if left stationary for long periods as using windscreen wipers on a dry screen could scratch the glass and damage your wiper blades.
- First drive - When you're ready to go out in your car for the first time in a long while, it's a good idea to let it run for a minute or so to ensure the oil has a chance to circulate properly – as it will have drained out of some areas over time. When you're driving, your car shouldn't feel any different in the way it drives, except that the brakes might be noisy at first. This is normal – the discs can rust easily when left, but this quickly clears as you start using the brakes. The best advice is to apply them gently at the start of your journey.
- Diesel Particulate Filters (DPF) - During normal use, DPF's clean themselves in a regenerative process that takes place when the engine is running at above 2500rpm for a prolonged period. During the lockdown, it will be difficult to reach, let alone maintain, the speeds necessary for this to take place, and your DPF could get clogged up with soot if you're using it for repeated short journeys. The best course of action is to go for a longer journey where you can maintain higher speed for a prolonged period when the lockdown rules allow this.
- MOT - Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the Government has granted drivers with an MOT due from 30 March an automatic six-month extension. So if, for example, yours was due on 2 April it will now run out on 2 October 2020 but you'll still have to keep your car in a roadworthy condition.

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