

The Truth About Idling

Each day, Americans waste approximately 3.8 million gallons of gasoline by voluntarily idling their cars, and an engine that idles for 10 minutes yields 90 grams of pollutants like carbon dioxide. Plus auto industry experts now say that idling is bad for your car.

Let's dispel some common myths about idling...

Myth #1: Your engine needs to warm up before driving in cold weather.

Reality: Idling is not an effective way to warm up your vehicle, even in cold weather. The best way to warm your engine is to drive the vehicle. With today's modern engines, there's little need for idling on winter days before driving away.

Myth #2: Idling is good for your engine.

Reality: Excessive idling can actually damage your engine components, including cylinders, spark plugs and exhaust systems. Fuel is only partially combusted when idling because an engine does not operate at its peak temperature. This leads to the build up of fuel residues on cylinder walls that can damage engine components and increase fuel consumption.

Myth #3: Turning off and restarting your vehicle is hard on the engine and uses more gas than if you leave it running.

Reality: Frequent restarting has little impact on engine components like the battery and the starter motor. Component wear caused by restarting the engine is estimated to add \$10 per year to the cost of driving, money that will likely be recovered several times over in fuel savings from reduced idling. The bottom line: more than 30 seconds of idling can use more fuel than restarting the engine.

Air Pollution Hits Home

Asthma is the most common chronic illness in children and the cause of most school absences. Children's asthma symptoms increase from exposure to car exhaust.

Children breathe, on average, 50% more air per pound of body weight than adults.

Children are closer to the ground and therefore, closer to the tailpipes.