

## Don't Overlook Importance of Engine Tuneup Prior to Wintertime Driving

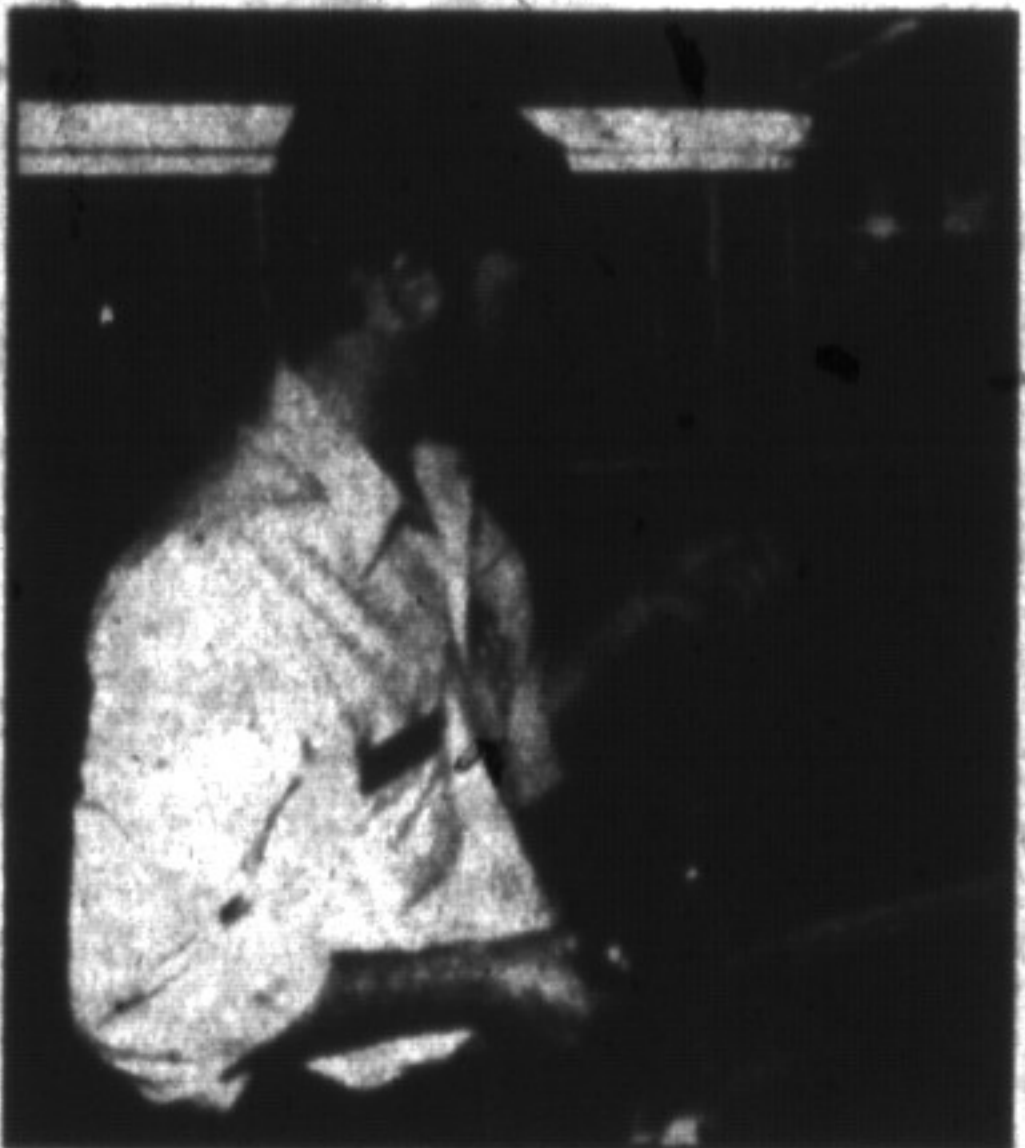
According to auto experts, if you own a car with an advanced electronic ignition system, don't overlook the importance of a periodic tuneup no matter how well or how long your engine has been performing.

Advanced ignition systems don't always show signs of wear even though certain parts may be going bad.

Cars with conventional ignition systems (points and condenser) used to start hard, idle rough, spew smoke and offer other telltale signs of problems when a tuneup was needed. This isn't always the case with electronic ignition cars.

Electronic ignition systems are sophisticated enough to often compensate for problems until things get so severe that major components like caps, rotors and ignition wires start burning. The results can be poor vehicle performance and an expensive repair bill . . . problems that could have been avoided with preventive maintenance.

As a rule, conventional ignition systems should be tuned every year or 12,000 miles (whichever comes first). Advanced ignition systems should receive a tuneup check every 15,000 to 20,000 miles. If you are a severe service driver, i.e., you subject your car to continual stop-and-go driving, a lot of short trips or pulling heavy loads (like a boat or trailer), your car may need tuning more often.



Tuneups involve checking the car's ignition and fuel systems and either adjusting or replacing parts. Prices and extent of tuneup work vary from shop to shop; what is considered standard at one shop may be an "extra" at another. To get the best value, shop around, compare tuneup offers, and always get an itemized quote before work is

## It's Time To Listen to Shock Absorbers

Although you won't necessarily hear noises in your car when your shock absorbers wear out, there are other signals car owners need to "listen" to when their shock absorbers begin to wear. By asking simple questions, you can save yourself significant repair bills.

First, you should be aware of such tendencies as the car dipping and bouncing. Worn shocks can cause a car to nose-dive when stopping quickly and bounce while driving. Next, ask yourself if the wheels dance or hop. Worn shocks allow excessive wheel hop during sudden stops, causing tires to lose road contact. Does the odometer read 25,000 miles or more? This is a good indication that the original shocks need checking. Does the shock have visible fluid loss? Check the vehicle on the hoist. Fluid leakage is a sure indication that shocks need to be replaced. Does the car float and drift? Worn shocks can cause a car to float or drift through turns.

### New Gas-Charged Types

Have your service dealer check out these trouble symptoms before they become major problems. When the need arises to purchase new shocks, you may want to consider gas-charged shocks.

performed.

If you own one of the new computer-equipped cars and your "check engine" light has been coming on, you'll need a diagnostic checkup followed by a "maintenance" tuneup as needed. You'll pay more for this type of checkup, but it's the only way to pinpoint whether you have a computer-related or deep-rooted tuneup problem.

Above all, stick with a good tuneup source once you've found one. A shop that knows your car's history is in the best position to recommend ideal tuneup intervals based on previous work performed.

### Tuneup Guidelines

The following is intended to serve as a guide. For further information on

tuneup intervals, check the owner's manual for your particular vehicle.

**Air filter:** Replace as often as necessary but at least every 20,000 miles.

**PCV valve:** This handy device allows some unburned fuel and emissions fumes to be burned in the cylinders, thereby lowering air pollution and increasing fuel economy.

**Fuel filter:** Replace once a year or every 20,000 miles.

**Points and condenser:** (applies to conventional ignition systems only). Replace as part of tuneup.

**Spark plug wires and boots:** Replace as needed and always in sets.

**Ignition timing:** Check and adjust every time points are replaced in conventional systems or every time plugs are replaced in electronic systems.



**Distributor cap:** With each tuneup, check for cracks and for erosion of the terminals. With conventional ignition systems, cap and rotor should always be replaced in a set.

**Emissions filters:** Today's cars can have several of these devices. Replace-

ment intervals vary widely from car to car (consult your owner's manual). Some vehicles have warning lights to remind you when these filters need changing.

**Spark plugs:** Depending on type of driving, these should be replaced every 15,000 to 30,000 miles.

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