

ADVERTISING FEATURE

WHEELS

Riding your brakes will ensure the need for frequent brake jobs

In survey after survey, Canadian drivers rank brake failure as their number one fear of mechanical failure.

Yet, only 20 per cent identified brakes as a system that should be checked regularly.

Car Care Canada believes people don't check their brakes because they don't understand them.

Discs. Drums. Power assist. ABS. Why does life have to be so complicated? Well, it's not so bad. It all depends on friction — the friction between the brake pad and the lining in a drum or the rotor of a disc brake and the friction between the tires and the road.

When you press down on the brake pedal, that creates pressure in the master cylinder.

This is passed through the brake lines to the brakes. If you have power to power-assisted brakes, you don't have to press as hard on the pedal to get the same braking effect.

In a drum brake, the brake shoes inside the drum press outward against the brake lining to create the stopping force. It's an enclosed unit that's relatively inexpensive to maintain.

Disc brakes are like bicycle brakes — the calipers pinch the disc, or rotor, to create the stopping force. Because of their heat rejection, disc brakes offer up to three times more stopping power than drums.

That's why most cars have discs on the front, where most of the stopping work is done, and drums on the rear.

Because of the heat generated in braking, pads used to be made with asbestos. Newer metallic materials have done away with asbestos and its harmful dust.

The fluid in the master cylinder is the medium that translates your pedal pressure into brake pressure.

It absorbs water very easily, so if you have to add fluid, use a fresh container. And use only the approved brake fluid described in your owner's manual.

How do you know when it's time for a brake job? If your brakes squeal or make a grinding noise, or if you feel a lot of vibration or grabbing, it's time for a check-up.

If your brake pedal sinks to the floor, or feels spongy, you may be low on fluid or have a leak in the system.

You should rotate your tires every 10,000 km or so to make them last.

When the car is on the hoist and the tires are off, that's an ideal time to do a little preventative maintenance and get your brakes checked. Brakes can last 60,000 km or more — or they can need replacement after 10,000-15,000 km.

Don't let this simple maintenance item slide, or the next sound you hear could be the crunch of a collision.

If you like paying for brake jobs, here's how to ensure you'll need frequent brake jobs:

1. Race up to stop signs and slam on the brakes.
2. Ride your brakes — use your right foot on the gas and rest your left on the brake pedal while you drive. This will also confuse the drivers behind you, because your brake lights will be on all the time and they'll have no warning when you really want to stop.
3. Stay really close to the car in front so you have to be on your brakes a lot

to match every little change in speed.

4. Ignore those warning signs, like chirping brakes or grinding noises.

Then a simple pad replacement becomes a full replacement of rotors and linings and costs hundreds more.

Can you economize on brake jobs? Absolutely. Car Care Canada suggests a simple five-point program that could save you hun-

dreds of dollars over the life of your car.

1. Preventative maintenance. Every 10,000 km or so, when you get your tires rotated, have your brakes inspected.

2. Don't neglect your parking brake. Using it regularly will keep the cable from seizing up, and will reduce your brake jobs and inferior performance.

4. Driving techniques.

Keep a buffer space between you and the car in front, and use it to slow down on the engine so you don't have to use the brakes as often.

5. System flush.

Once a year, have a full brake inspection, including all lines and hoses, and replace the brake fluid with fresh fluid.

FINAL DAYS!

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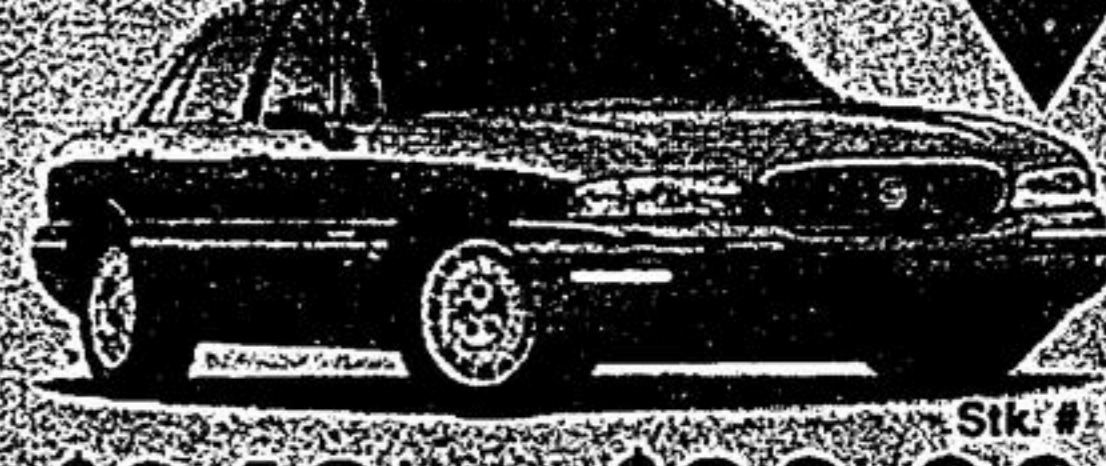
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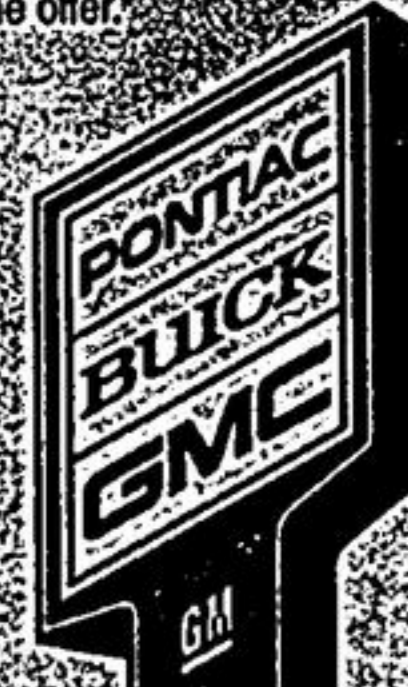
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SERVICE HOURS - Mon. - Thurs. 7:30 - 7:30, Fri. 7:30 - 5:30, Sat. 8:00 - 1:00