

"I'll just leave the engine running for a minute."

Idling Myths & FACTS



What is idling?

"Idling" is leaving your engine running while your car is not moving. Common reasons for idling include waiting for someone or warming up the car.

Myth:

Myth: Restarting my engine is bad for it.

FACT: Since the early '90s, nearly all passenger cars in the U.S. have come equipped with fuel injection technology. This efficient delivery of fuel to your car's engine keeps oil from washing off cylinder interiors and prevents oil dilution. Only your battery and starter are truly affected by frequent starts. But **the cost of this wear and tear is only estimated at \$10 a year, which is outweighed by the fuel-cost savings of shutting off your engine.**

Myth: I need to warm up my engine.

FACT: **Idling isn't an effective way to warm up your vehicle, even in cold weather.** The best way to warm up your car is to drive it. An idling engine isn't operating at its peak temperature. Fuel doesn't undergo complete combustion at lower temperatures, creating residues that can condense on cylinder walls. These residues can contaminate oil and damage parts of the engine. Excessive idling can increase fuel consumption by decreasing your engine's efficiency and cause corrosion in the exhaust system. Your car needs no more than 30 seconds to fully circulate oil on freezing days.

Myth: Leaving the car running uses less fuel.

FACT: **Restarting a V-6 engine uses about the same amount of fuel as idling for five seconds.** If you'll be stopped for more than one minute and it's safe to turn off your engine, you'll save more money by shutting it down.

Myth: I'll freeze/burn up without the heat/AC.

FACT: Idling on a warm day with the air conditioning on burns even more fuel than idling without AC. On an 88-degree day, your car probably uses about one-quarter gallon of fuel in 30 minutes — or about 75 cents at a fuel cost of \$3 per gallon. **If you were to idle for a total of 30 minutes every weekday for one year, you'd be spending nearly \$200 on gasoline that's not taking you anywhere.** Gloves, warm/cold drinks and personal fans can all help make you comfortable without costing you money.

Sources: American Society of Mechanical Engineers, National Safety Council, The Journal of the American Medical Association, Harvard University (University Operations Services), Environmental Protection Agency

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Leaving my engine running when I'm stopped isn't harmful.

FACTS:

Vehicle emissions are a major contributor to air pollution, and **idling can produce more pollution per minute than driving.**

Studies have linked various types of vehicle emissions to **asthma symptoms, cardiopulmonary disease, lung cancer and other causes of death.** Ground-level ozone, which is caused by a reaction between two exhaust byproducts, has been associated with eye, nose and throat irritation and, in higher concentrations, asthma, bronchitis, increased susceptibility to respiratory infections, and decreased lung function.

Children are even more vulnerable to air pollution than adults because they breathe much more air per pound of body weight and their respiratory defenses are not fully developed.



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