

# Car Troubles & Fixes



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Most of us spend over twelve years in school. We'll take Home Economics classes that teach us how to cook without setting our house on fire, but no one ever teaches us about cars. If you've ever had car problems, then you know they can be detrimental and costly. And you probably wish someone would have told you sooner how to avoid these issues. Below are the top five common car mistakes we make, how to avoid them and how to fix them.

1. Leaving your sunroof open

This isn't earth shattering, until something is stolen or... it rains. Newer cars have sunroofs and if you accidentally leave that open could damage the interior. If you've done this, it's important to note that you must go to a **car wash IMMEDIATELY**. Do not think towels and driving around with the windows open will fix this. The water has already seeped deep into your seats and to prevent mold, it's best to go to a car wash, explain what happened and request a full wash and dry. This can run you up to 100 bucks. While you could buy the same vacuums they use at car washes to suck up the water, I don't recommend it. You messed up, that's ok, we all do. Next step is to bite the bullet and pay the professionals to sort it. And for the future, **check** your car after you parked it to make sure your sunroof is down, lights are off and you're legally parked. Better safe than sorry.

## 2. Driving too soon in cold weather

A friend once told me that driving your car immediately when it's cold is like asking a 500-pound person to run a marathon. Warming up your car and giving it a chance to fully wake up before driving is a good move and with old cars, a necessity. If you don't, the car may shake when you start driving. If you make a habit out of driving without warming up the car it will likely cause the car to run slower. When you enter your car, there is something on the **dashboard** with a "C" and "H" standing for hot and cold. This tells you the temperature of your car. If it is too cold, the dial will be below the C. Wait for it to get above the C and go.

## 3. Not tightening your gas cap

Recently the "check engine" light kept popping up. The car was running fine but we still took it in. Turns out, my gas cap was loose. Luckily we caught the problem early. Had we not, we would have had problems. Always make sure after you fill up, the gas cap is **tight**. You will

hear a crunching sound and that's how you'll know it's tightened. Always turn right. Righty Tightly Lefty Loosey.

#### 4. Filling your car with diesel fuel

This happens more than people think. The sooner you realize you've made the mistake the better. Do not drive! That's the most important thing. You don't want to the fuel getting into the engine. While some people know how to open their gas tank and empty the fuel, DON'T. Pretty sure it's illegal and it's best to leave the disposal of fuel to professionals. Get it to a **car shop** immediately. The longer the fuel sits in the car the worse. While it usually can be fixed, it's a messy, expensive ordeal so take your time when filling your car with gas or go to a station that does it for you.

#### 5. Leaving your lights on

This one is difficult to screw up with newer cars because newer cars beep before you exit if you're lights have been left on. But older cars don't have that luxury. If you leave your lights on overnight it will drain the battery of your car and you won't be able to start it the next day. This can be fixed with jumper cables that you hook up to someone else's car. Don't make a habit of this. Newer cars will survive, but if you have an older car, doing this even a few times can ruin its efficiency forever. As I mentioned earlier, **look** at your car again after you've parked to make sure everything is fine before leaving it.

Resources: A hopelessly oblivious car driver learning as she goes.