

Enjoy the Road Ahead!

Check out these handy tips to help de-stress your car and your lives.

Keep it **Filled**



Nothing spoils the party like an empty gas tank.

Always make sure the fuel gauge never dips below one-quarter.

Keep it **Together**

Remember the essentials with a checklist and all documents

One major stressor is having to turn around and go home for forgotten items.

Always create a list with essentials and ensure you have an up-to-date license, insurance, ownership and license plates and ensure you have contact information for your auto club membership.



Keep it **Clean**



A daily trip to work can be pretty stressful in a cluttered car. Add in the kids, the snacks and the luggage and it can be downright scary! Keeping the car clean is simple by following these tips:

1. Have a "home" for loose change.
2. Buy a snap-on trash bag for your car, or even have a stash of plastic bags.
3. Keep the glove box lean and clean.
4. Have baby wipes and tissues available for quick cleaning.
5. Change the car air freshener once a month.
6. Take something inside the house every time you leave the car.

Car Cleaning Group Effort

For those who have their hands full all the time, perhaps #6 (above) won't work. For this, it is recommended that you pick a time once a week, (and certainly before a trip) and devote 10 minutes to do a quick sweep of your car so it does not become an overhaul much later on. Doing this as a family is a great way for kids to take some responsibility and earn their allowance. (Perhaps they can even find their allowance in the form of loose change!)

Driven to distraction

There are many temptations that should be avoided to ensure stress-free and safe driving. Here is a list of things to avoid:

Cellphones

Cellphones are illegal in some provinces if you're not hands-free. That being said, several recent reports suggest that Bluetooth devices are no safer than handheld phones because it's the distraction of the conversation that presents the danger. (See the *Myth Slayer Guide - Myth 10: Hands-free Headsets are Safer than Cellphones at www.carcarecanada.ca*.)



Overall, the best rule is don't use a cellphone while driving at all. If you must, do the following:

- ☛ Pull over and stop.
- ☛ Allow a passenger to operate the phone.
- ☛ Use voice mail and respond to the call at a safer time.
- ☛ Let someone else drive, freeing yourself up to make or receive calls.

Other Distractions to avoid:

- ☛ Avoid playing with the music, whether i-pod, radio or CD (set it and forget it, at a sensible level of volume).
- ☛ Avoid typing addresses into your GPS device.
- ☛ Steer clear of all reading (whether maps or novels, your eyes should be on the road).
- ☛ Stay away from changing clothes, taking off your coat, etc.
- ☛ Avoid shaving, makeup, combing, and even flossing (yes, you can wait until you have arrived before grooming!)
- ☛ Never eat or drink while driving.





Stress-Free Driving

Here are some easy driving tips to relieve stress whether in the city or on the highway):

- 👉 Set the clock in your car 3 to 5 minutes fast.
- 👉 Try to leave yourself at least 5 extra minutes to get where you're going.
- 👉 Plan your route and print out all maps and directions.
- 👉 Have a passenger help with navigation if possible.
- 👉 Don't sweat the small stuff.
- 👉 If somebody cuts you off, don't worry, you will probably never see them again.
- 👉 Yield and let someone in once in awhile.
- 👉 Avoid speeding, tailgating, and erratic lane changing.



Plan your Road Trip and always do a 10-minute road-trip checkup

"Getting the car ready for family travel can take as little as 10 minutes, and relieve a world of stress" says Be Car Care Aware spokesperson, Kelly Williams.

Here is a quick 10-minute check-up to help drivers ensure vehicle safety and reliability before heading out on a road trip.

- 👉 Check all fluids.
- 👉 Check hoses and belts.
- 👉 Check the tires.
- 👉 Check lighting.
- 👉 Check the wiper blades and make sure the windshield wipers are working properly.

The perennial Be Car Care Aware Family Road Trip Guide, which includes the "10-minute Road Trip Check-Up, is available online at www.carcarecanada.ca at no charge.

It helps Canadians prepare their vehicles for Spring and Summer driving and includes tips for saving gas, protecting the environment and ensuring safety, as well as in-car games for kids and meal planning.