

Fuel-efficient driving saves money and will make others green with envy

As petrol prices continue to soar to increasingly high levels, Derbyshire motorists are looking at their driving techniques to improve their fuel efficiency and reduce their carbon footprint. **Caroline Jones** looks at some of the advice being given out by the experts.

AN average driver and a green motorist can both have the same car, travel to the same places and spend the same amount of time on the road.

But there the similarities end – because it is the green motorist who is saving hundreds of pounds a year.

By employing a few basic driving techniques, they are reducing the amount of petrol they use on a journey-by-journey basis.

From anticipating the road conditions to changing gear at the right time, the Energy Saving Trust say the changes are designed to tackle rising fuel costs and save the planet.

Justin Pistana, a fuel-efficient driving instructor who works with the national organisation, said the techniques were incredibly simple and straightforward.

He spoke to the Derby Telegraph while training Government Office for the East Midlands staff, who are working in Derby with organisation UK Trade and Investment.

He said: "It's amazing how

little people have to learn to make their driving more fuel efficient.

"It just becomes part of your normal driving routine and yet makes such a difference in reducing petrol costs.

"Whenever I take people out to learn how to drive more efficiently, they always seem surprised at how easy it is.

"But they are more surprised when they see how

Changing gear at the right time is incredibly simple and effective, too.

Justin Pistana

much they could save – and usually quite pleased as well."

Mr Pistana was giving the lessons at the UK Trade and Investment base, in Raynesway.

The Energy Saving Trust is urging drivers to reduce the carbon emissions from their vehicles each day.

Figures show, on average, drivers could make annual savings of about £325 by increas-



GREEN MACHINE: Pictured behind the wheel, left, is John Proud. Above, Kay Marsden. Top, instructor Justin Pistana with Derby Telegraph reporter Caroline Jones.

Pictures: Leah McLaren LM240310B-9, B-6 & B-11

observing other drivers while learning because there didn't seem much difference.

"I now know how important it is to keep the car moving and how the momentum means I'm using less fuel and saving more money.

"I'm pleased to learn these techniques because I do want

The advice they receive will help them to reduce emissions.

Denise Marsdon

to cut costs but I also want to reduce my carbon emissions as well."

The Energy Saving Trust, which has an advice centre in the East Midlands, wants drivers to use its website and leaflets to learn more about eco-driving.

The organisation said "smarter driving" could reduce carbon emissions from vehicles by an average of 15%.

Denise Marsdon, centre manager at the Energy Saving Trust advice centre, said: "We are very happy to be working with GOEM to increase the fuel efficiency of their staff.

"The advice they receive will help them to reduce emissions and save money not only for the government office but also for themselves at home.

"If everyone took this advice, it would be equivalent to taking the same percentage of vehicles off the road, which would be a huge step in the fight against climate change."

Anyone who wants more information on eco-driving should call the Energy Saving Trust on 0800 512 012 or visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk.

TEN TOP TIPS ON HOW TO DRIVE MORE EFFICIENTLY

1. Drive off from cold: Modern cars are designed to move straight away and warming up the engine just wastes fuel.
2. Check your revs: Change up a gear before 2,500rpm if your vehicle runs on petrol or 2,000rpm if it runs on diesel.
3. Drive smoothly: Anticipate road conditions and drive smoothly to avoid sharp acceleration and heavy braking, as this saves fuel and reduces accident rates.
4. Step off the accelerator:

When slowing down or driving downhill, take your foot off the accelerator early as this reduces fuel flow to the engine.

5. Slow down: Driving within the speed limit is safer, law-abiding and reduces fuel consumption.

6. Switch it off: Modern cars use virtually no extra fuel when re-started, so turn off the engine if stationary for more than a minute or two.

7. Plan ahead: Plan journeys to avoid congestion and roadworks and to make

sure fuel and time are not wasted by getting lost.

8. Keep it long: Use other forms of transport for short journeys as cold engines use almost twice as much fuel.

9. Reduce drag: Accessories like roof racks, bike carriers and roof boxes significantly affect car aerodynamics and reduce fuel efficiency, so remove them when not in use.

10. Check tyre pressure: Under-inflated tyres are dangerous and increase fuel consumption.

When the police will be waiting to hear worries

POLICE have announced a list of dates of surgeries to hear residents' concerns.

The meetings give people an opportunity to talk to their local officers about issues cropping up where they live.

In Alfreton, these surgeries take place at the following places:

- May 5: South Normanton and Pinxton Safer Neighbourhood Team. Neighbourhood panel meeting at the village hall on Kirkstead Road in Pinxton, starting at 7pm.
- May 6: South Normanton and Pinxton Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery at the village hall on Kirkstead Road in Pinxton, 5pm to 7pm.
- May 13: Alfreton Town Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery at the mobile police office parked on Institute Lane in Alfreton, 2pm to 3pm.
- May 18: Alfreton Rural Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery at The Glebe Field Centre in Crich, 11am to noon.
- May 31: Riddings and Ironville Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery at the Safer Neighbourhood police office on Monument Lane in Ironville, noon to 1pm.

In Belper, they will take place at the following places:

- May 5: Kilburn Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery at Kilburn Community Centre in Bown Close, 7pm to 8pm.
- May 10: Quarndon and Kirk Langley Safer Neighbourhood Team. Neighbourhood panel meeting at The Cross Keys public house in Ashbourne Road, Turnditch, 6pm to 8pm.
- May 11: Belper Town Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery at the SureStart Centre in Parks Estate, Belper, 3pm to 4pm.
- May 17: Heage and Ambergate Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery at Park Crescent in Heage, 5pm to 6pm.
- May 18: Heage and Ambergate Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery at the BP Garage in Ambergate, 5pm to 6pm.

In Ripley, surgeries will take place at the following places:

- May 2: Ripley Town Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery at Ripley Safer Neighbourhood Team Police Office, Ripley Town Hall (the former Tourist Information Centre), 3pm to 6pm.
- May 10: Codnor and Waingroves Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery at Highfields Community Centre in Codnor, 11am to 2pm.
- May 20: Ripley Town Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery and community stall at Ripley Hospital (reception area), 10am to 1pm.
- May 20: Heanor and Loscoe Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery at Tesco car park in Heanor, 11am to 2pm.
- May 26: Ripley Town Safer Neighbourhood Team. Police surgery at Ripley Safer Neighbourhood Team Police Office, Ripley Town Hall (the former Tourist Information Centre), 2pm to 5pm.

Canadian family's pocket watch riddle solved by jeweller

A DERBY jeweller has helped to solve the mystery behind a timepiece that had been perplexing a family 4,000 miles away for more than a century. Glyn Smoothy, director of W E Watts in the Cornmarket, received a phone call from Brian Uffen in Ontario, Canada, asking if he could give the ancestry of a pocket watch that had been handed down from his great-grandfather to his grandfather and eventually to him.

Mr Uffen had heard stories of a family pocket watch that had previously been passed down on the occasion of the eldest son's 21st birthday but was not sure whether this was the one in question.

After trawling the internet with details of the watch, he discovered contact details for Watts.

Through conversations and emails with Mr Smoothy, Mr Uffen was able to determine that the date and original location of the watch matched his family genealogy.

It was, indeed, the watch that he had heard about.



TIMELY AID: Glyn Smoothy

Mr Smoothy found out that the silver watch was made in 1888 in Chester.

Mr Smoothy said: "We often receive calls from people asking us to confirm the provenance of items of antique jewellery.

"But to be contacted from the other side of the Atlantic is quite a rarity."

Mr Uffen said: "I am so grateful to Glyn and his team for going above and beyond the call of duty in assisting me with my query.

"He has bestowed upon me a bit of history to share with my son as he receives this cherished family heirloom."

The head for business that beat liquidation

A Derby hair and beauty business has thanked its loyal clientele for helping it battle through the economic downturn and the opening of the city's Westfield shopping centre.



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Retired surgeons set off on their epic charity trek

A BIKE ride to raise funds for the Derby Branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society is under way.

A group of retired Derby surgeons and a doctor from the United States have set off from Land's End to John O'Groats last week.

Gynaecologists John Hodgkins and Ian Scott, orthopaedic surgeon Tony Henry and general and vascular surgeon Ken Callum all worked at Derby's hospitals before retiring.

And accident and emergency consultant Ellen Weber, based in San Francisco, has taken time out from a business trip in England to join them for part of the ride.

Paul Gates, chairman of the Derby branch of the charity, said: "I'm absolutely delighted that they're doing this, it's a fantastic effort which should raise lots of money."

The group, who have not set a fund-raising target, set off on April 22 and hope to finish their bike ride on May 19.

Proceeds will go to Lilian Prime House, in Derby, which is the headquarters of the society's local branch.

Unions strike deal with college over training courses

A COLLEGE in Derby has signed agreements with two unions to provide skills training for their members.

Derby College has joined forces with the Communications Workers Union and the United Road Transport Union.

More than 2,000 Derbyshire CWU members and non-members will benefit from a range of job-specific NVQ accredited courses as well as literacy, numeracy and IT short lessons, delivered either at work or at the college over the coming year.

A two-year agreement with the URTU will support workers across the East Midlands on a similar range of courses.

Simon Ferrar, operations manager for Derby College Trade Union Education Centre, said: "Both agreements with these unions provide access to flexible and, at times, rapid-response learning facilities to meet the needs of unions, employers and workers during these difficult economic times.

"They will also promote trade union involvement in the skills agenda and show employers the benefits of working in partnership to support workplace learning."

'I heard the two drivers behind me burning away their money'

Derby Telegraph reporter **Caroline Jones** has a go at eco-driving.

BAD habits can be hard to break, which is why I was particularly nervous about taking my eco-driving lesson.

Heavy braking and inefficient gear changes don't seem so bad when travelling from A to B and saving the planet is the last thing on your mind.

But, when someone is scrutinising your every move, it's a different matter altogether and a horrible reminder of the

dreaded driving test. Yet all of this soon disappeared from my mind – as I learnt I could save more than £100-a-year on my petrol costs.

Driving around the route outlined by my driving instructor, Justin Pistana, I started out by trying to do things I considered to be environmentally-friendly.

However, I soon realised how clueless I was about it when Mr Pistana began going through the real ways to drive efficiently.

Changing up my gears before the car started to whine and slowing down before a junction

not only seemed sensible, it seemed safer.

But the biggest revelation came when reaching a level crossing and stopping the car just as the gates came down.

Mr Pistana turned to me and said: "We could be here for a while, so why don't you turn off the engine?"

The simplicity of the idea was almost comical – particularly as I could hear the engines of two cars waiting behind me. It was almost as if I could hear them burning away their money.

Then it was time to show off what I'd learnt on our third run

of the route, to see if I could save any money.

Apart from stalling the car once at a roundabout, it seemed to go without a hitch.

Returning to base, I was informed, on my first run of the circuit, I had used 46.6 miles per gallon.

On my final journey, I had used 54.8 miles per gallon. Taking into account my own car's specifications and my annual mileage, I was told I could save £150-a-year if I kept up the good work.

With this financial incentive, even I will be happy to do my bit to save the planet.



REVELATION: Caroline Jones during her eco-driving lesson. Picture: Leah McLaren LM240310B-4

avoid accidents. "Changing gear at the right time is also incredibly simple but effective too.

"You can look at your rev counter but, after a while, drivers get so used to the sound of their car and changing at the right time becomes a good habit."

Mr Pistana's sessions involved driving around a 10-minute route and measuring the person used to complete the journey. He then taught the student some fuel-efficient driving techniques, before they travelled the same route again – this time practicing what they had learnt.

On that run of the route, Mr Pistana again measured the amount of miles to the gallon and compared them with the first run.

Taking into account the specifications of student's own car and their annual mileage, he then worked out how much money they could save each year.

Other techniques he taught include switching off the vehicle's engine while it is stationary for more than a minute and using air conditioning only when needed.

He also advised GOEM staff to check their tyres and reduce the amount of accessories in the car to cut drag.