

SPRING 2024

LeasePlan

# Driving Insights



12 tips for spring  
cleaning your car

The dangers of  
driving distracted

What to do next when  
you're in an accident

Ideas for saving money

Maintenance tips:

# 12 tips for spring cleaning your car

Your lease vehicle needs to be in good condition when you return it to us, but that's not the only reason to give it a thorough cleaning every now and then. This is a great way to take care of it during your contract – plus you'll be making it nicer to look at and spend time in.

## Cleaning the outside of your car

### 01 Think about a pre-wash

If it's been a while since you cleaned the car, giving it a quick rinse will help get rid of mud and dirt before you start with the soap.

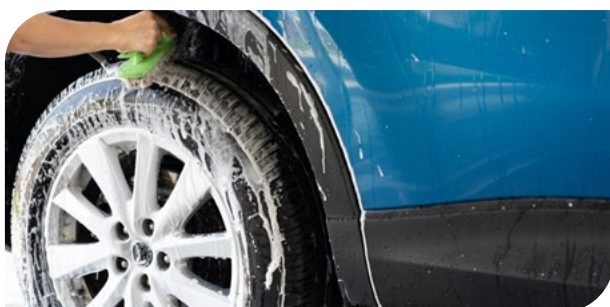


### 02 Get washing

Make up a bucket of soapy water and get going with your microfibre mitt or sponge. Remember to start at the top first and work down – and rinse regularly to avoid scratching the paint.

### 03 Brush your tyres

For tyres, it can be better to use a dedicated wheel brush, rather than your usual sponge, as they can leave grit and dirt on it that might scratch your car during your next wash.



### 04 Remember to dry

While you can leave a washed car to air dry, this might lead to water spots on your paintwork. Giving it a quick once-over with a microfibre towel or chamois helps avoid this. Just remember to make sure that whatever you use is clean, so you don't scratch your paint.



### 05 Clean the lights

Your lights help you stay safe on the road, so it makes sense to get them as bright as possible. One way to clean them is with a toothbrush and a non-abrasive toothpaste.

### 06 See more clearly

You need your windows and mirrors to be clean so you can see where you're going and what's happening around you. Glass cleaner and a microfibre towel are a good option here – and remember to clean the inside of the windows as well as the outside.



## Cleaning the inside of your car

### 01 Start with the vacuum

Vacuuming the carpets, seats and mats is an easy way to make a visible difference to your car. One extra tip, if you ever upgrade your vacuum cleaner, keep the old one for your car, as you're likely to pick up a lot more stones, sand and dirt than you do in the house.



### 02 Do a surface clean

Wiping down surfaces with an interior cleaner and a microfibre towel can give them a new lease of life – just be careful whenever you're near electrics or screens. Some sites suggest using olive oil and a cloth to make your dashboard sparkle. If you do this, remember to test a small area first to make sure it works for your car.

### 03 Refresh your seat covers

Whether you have fabric or leather seats, there'll be a cleaner that works for them. You don't need to do the whole thing, just use a brush to spot clean the areas that need work. Just test the cleaner on a small inconspicuous area first to make sure it doesn't discolour the material.

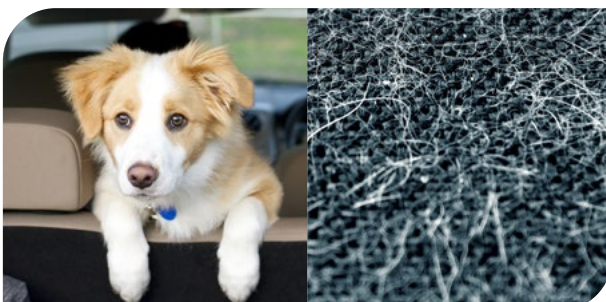


### 04 Dust your vents

Air vents can seem like a magnet for dust and they're not the easiest to clean. One solution is to use a small paint brush that can get inside the gaps and hold your vacuum cleaner underneath to catch the dirt as it comes out.

### 05 Get rid of pet hair

If you drive with a pet in your car, it's likely it will be leaving hairs. To get rid of them, try spraying a little water on the fabric and then wipe it with a window squeegee.



### 06 Make the next clean easier

Cup holders are one of the hardest parts of the car to vacuum or wipe, but there's an easy fix for next time. Buy a pack of cupcake cases and push one into the bottom of each cupholder. When it's time to clean, just lift them out and replace them.



## Don't forget your five vehicle checks

Whenever you're cleaning your car, it's worth taking a few minutes to do five simple checks that can help keep you safe on the roads:

- 01 Do you have the right tyre pressure?
- 02 Is the tread depth on all your tyres within legal limits?
- 03 Do you need to top up your screen wash?
- 04 Do you need to top up your oil or coolant?
- 05 Do your windscreen wipers need replacing?





Driver advice:

# The dangers of driving distracted

New research has shown that hands-free phone use while driving can be just as dangerous as holding your phone to use it.

The 2022 ban on holding and using a phone while driving has helped limit this dangerous behaviour, but it could have had an unintended side-effect.

As hands-free use is not included in the legalisation, some drivers may have got the impression that this is a safe way to use their phones while behind the wheel.

While that may be true if the phone is acting as a sat nav, the situation is very different when it comes to phone calls. Research by the Open University, which was recently featured in Fleet News magazine, has shown that drivers are four times more likely to crash when using a phone for calls. And this increased risk is the same whether the phone is being held or used hands-free.

*Research showed that drivers would sometimes look directly at a hazard but not actually see it, because their attention was on the call.*

This is because the distraction of focusing on the road and on a call at the same time is the same no matter how the phone is being used. The research showed that drivers would sometimes look directly at a hazard but not actually see it, because their attention was on the call.

The situation can get even worse with conference calls, as there may be multiple voices talking at the same time, which makes it even more distracting.

Worryingly, this effect doesn't just last for the duration of the call. It can persist for as long as five minutes after the call ends, so the risks can be significant, even for a quick call. The solution is a simple one. It's recommended that drivers don't take calls while they're behind the wheel. For those who drive long distances, it may even be worth recording a dedicated voicemail message telling people where you are - and letting them know that you'll call back when you have the chance to do it safely.



Accident management:

# What to do next when you're in an accident

If you're ever in an accident, the first thing to do is make sure that you and your passengers are safe. Once you've done that, we know it isn't easy to think about your insurance claim, but if you can follow the nine steps we've outlined below, it could save you a lot of time and effort over the next few months.

**Step 1:**

Make a detailed account of events, as it may be required for a witness statement.

**Step 2:**

Take down details of the other party involved in the accident, including a mobile phone number.

**Step 3:**

Get details of any witnesses to the accident (name, address, mobile number).

**Step 4:**

Make a note about any CCTV cameras in the area.



**Step 5:**

Check your dash cam footage is available (if you have one fitted).

**Step 6:**

Use your phone to take images or video of the incident and the surroundings as soon as it is safe to do.

**Step 7:**

Make a sketch of incident, including pre-accident positions, if you have some paper to hand. If you have smartphone, use a note-taking or drawing app to sketch the scene and intended route.

**Step 8:**

If the emergency services are called out, remember to write down any reference numbers or contact details they give you.

**Step 9:**

Call our DriverLine. We're open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so we'll be here to help you. Give us all the information from steps 1 to 8 and tell us if you have a tracker/telematics device fitted, so we can use this for geo-positioning. Our team can then handle everything to do with your car or van. This can include dealing with your insurer, arranging repairs, sorting out a replacement vehicle and even helping with any medical issues that you have after the accident.



If you are a LeasePlan driver and you've been involved in an incident, call the DriverLine.  
Add this number to your phone today: 0345 250 0000



Driving tips:

# Ideas for saving money

There's rarely a bad time to save money, but over the last few years it has been even more important for many people. Here are our top tips to make motoring a little more affordable.

## Saving money by driving more efficiently

### 01 Speed:

While it can feel good to put your foot down, accelerating hard and driving fast burns more fuel. Driving a little slower and more smoothly might be less fun, but you'll get more miles out of every tank.

### 02 Gears:

Changing gears early and smoothly reduces engine revs, which means improved fuel economy. One handy tip is to think about shifting gears in a block – such as going straight from third to fifth or vice versa – as this can make accelerating or decelerating more efficient.



### 03 Tyres:

Underinflated tyres wear out quickly and increase fuel consumption. Checking your tyre pressure regularly (such as once a week) can help ensure it doesn't drop too low. This may not sound like much, but it could improve fuel efficiency by up to 10%.

### 04 Aircon:

It's nice to stay cool in your car, but fuel consumption takes a hit when the aircon is on. Choosing when to use it can make a real difference. Unless it is a really hot day, we'd suggest having the windows open until you reach 40mph and only turning the aircon on (and closing the windows) above this level. Just remember to use it at least once a week to keep it in good condition.

### 05 The roof:

Roof racks and bars create significant drag at high speeds. It can be tempting to leave them on all the time to make life easier, but taking them off when you don't need them can reduce fuel costs by up to 30% on motorways.

### 06 Traffic jams:

There's not much you can do to save fuel in stop-start traffic, but if you've been static in a traffic jam for more than three minutes, the AA suggests it's a good idea to turn the engine off. This ensures you aren't burning fuel unnecessarily.

### 07 The boot:

Decluttering the boot is unlikely to make a massive difference to fuel economy (unless it's usually full of bricks), but removing unnecessary weight can still make your motoring a little more efficient.

### 08 Other drivers:

When you're at the wheel, try to observe any patterns in traffic and take cues from other drivers. Being aware of what's ahead of you can help you minimise unnecessary braking or accelerating. This uses your momentum more efficiently, so you improve fuel economy.

### 09 Maintenance:

Make sure you follow the full maintenance schedule for your vehicle. Well maintained vehicles tend to operate more efficiently, plus you'll reduce the chances of accidents and breakdowns.

### 10 Route planning:

For longer trips, or journeys you do regularly, take a few minutes to explore your route options. You might find a way to reduce your mileage or just cut back on time spent stuck in traffic – particularly if you then use real-time traffic updates while you are on the road.



## Saving money by cutting the cost of car insurance

There is legislation that says existing customers should be offered the same insurance prices as new customers. Unfortunately, loopholes in the rules mean that it doesn't always work out that way.

This is why shopping around for insurance every year is still a good idea – and it's easy to do as well, particularly if you use price comparison websites. It can even pay to use more than one price comparison site, as they may show different prices for the same vehicle from the same insurer.

There is then more you can do if you want to try saving more money. Research by MoneySavingExpert found that the cheapest time to get quotes is between 26 days and 20 days before your renewal date. And it's not just a small saving. Their analysis found the average difference in price between a quote on renewal day and 23 days before can be several hundred pounds.

It's also worth taking the time to think about how you actually use your car. Start with the miles you do in a year. We know this isn't always easy to work out, so when you're getting an insurance quote, the temptation can be to pick a figure that you're sure you won't go over. However, this is also likely to be much more than you actually drive and more miles can mean more cost. Taking the figure down to something more accurate (even if you still aim a little high) could save you money.

Then, take a look at your add-ons. Most car insurance policies offer these additional cover options for anything from no claims protection and legal cover to key cover or excess cover. Depending on your situation, these could be well worth using. But something you needed a few years ago may be less essential now – and add-ons add costs.

If you're changing insurers, ask yourself if you really need the add-ons you usually use. If you're renewing, remember it's on the same basis as the previous year. That includes any add-ons you use. If you've been with the same insurer for a while, it's worth checking to see if you're paying for any extras you don't require – or possibly didn't even realise you had.

Finally, there's your policy's excess. This is the part you pay on a claim, while the insurer should cover the rest. Most policies have a 'compulsory excess' but you can then add a 'voluntary excess' if you want. This increases the amount you pay for a claim, but it should also reduce your premium. The more you add, the more your premium should go down.

If you do this, please do remember to make sure the saving is worth it. Even if you're a very careful driver, you can't control the other people on the road. Saving a few pounds on your premium is unlikely to be a good deal if it means you end up paying several hundred more the one time someone drives into you.

*Research by MoneySavingExpert found that the cheapest time to get quotes is between 26 days and 20 days before your renewal date.*

# Need any help?

Just call our DriverLine on **0345 250 0000**

Or use our

A large, abstract graphic composed of several overlapping, rounded shapes in various shades of orange and red, creating a sense of movement and depth. The shapes are layered, with some appearing in front of others, and they fill the lower two-thirds of the page.