

Top 10 Fuel-Savers

By Brent Peterson

1. Inflate those tires! – This is something everyone knows and no one ever does. We rank this #1 on the list because maintaining your tire's recommended air pressure is without a doubt the cheapest, easiest way to save fuel and, therefore, cash. Carry a tire pressure gauge and learn to wield it.

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2. Steady speeds – Next time you're on the treadmill, what's more tiring – a steady jog or rampant burst of speed and dramatic slow-downs? Just like you, life is easier on your RV's engine at a constant pace.
3. Lighten the load – We're all driving around with some seriously useless stuff onboard. That wok? World Book Encyclopedias? The complete Ernest Borgnine collection on DVD? Lighten the load and watch your miles per gallon rise. And definitely loose the storage pod on the roof! It's a drag in every sense of the word.
4. Secondary vehicle, primary savings – For many, towing a secondary vehicle makes sense. True, it lowers crucial mpg while towed, but can more than make up for its dead weight for all those quick jaunts once the destination is reached. This vehicle is all about function, so favor the most fuel-efficient vehicle you can. Hybrid, anyone?
5. Drafting – If it's good enough for NASCAR, it's good enough for me. Ease your driving profile by getting (safely) cozy behind a big rig for some drafting-type action on long trips. Let that big rig cut a tall path through the wind on your behalf.
6. Easy on AC/easy on the windows – On one hand, you have a hard-working air conditioner, which taxes your engine (fuel economy!) as you motor about. Drop those windows, and you create a wind drag, which also hurts the mpg cause. The solution? Launch long drives in the early morning or even late afternoons and evenings, when the temperatures are more manageable. Brilliant, no?
7. Idling – This is not 1976 – your diesel engine no longer requires excessive idling to prepare it for the trip to the grocery store. Nor does any modern vehicle, for that matter. 30 seconds tops, people!
8. Buy fuel-efficiency – RV buyers are starting to ask questions about their rig's fuel-efficiency before they buy. And while these estimates are fairly slippery, common sense tells us that smaller and lighter usually trumps fatter and longer when it comes to fuel costs. For serious travelers, a five-gallon-per-mile savings will add up to huge annual dollars. Maybe this is time to downsize to that Class B, which can triple the fuel economy of a mid-size motor home!
9. Plan the route - Consolidate four separate errands into one and bask in the savings at the pump. Better yet, car-pool with a friend!
10. Peak performance – Keeping your vehicle in peak condition rewards owners in a myriad of ways, not just savings at the pump. A pristine air filter, clean oil, and a Felix Unger approach to annual maintenance will keep your rig running at its most-efficient best.

Brent Peterson is the author of "[The Complete Idiot's Guide to RVing.](#)"