

Top 3 Myths about Idling

Idling Myth No. 1: The engine should be warmed up before driving away.

Contrary to popular belief, idling is not an effective way to warm up your vehicle, even in cold weather. The best way to do this is to actually drive away.

As a rule of thumb, if you are going to be stopped for 10 seconds or more, except in traffic, turn your engine off. Even in the winter, today's modern engines require no more than 30 seconds of warm-up time before driving away.

Idling only warms the engine, not the wheel bearings, steering, suspension, transmission and tires. These parts also need to be warmed up, and the only way to do this is to get the vehicle moving on the road. (Source: Natural Resources Canada.)

Idling Myth No. 2: Idling is Good for Your Engine.

An idling engine is an engine not operating at its peak temperature, which means that fuel combustion is incomplete. This leaves fuel residues that can condense on cylinder walls, where they can contaminate oil and damage engine components.

When fuel residues deposit on spark plugs over time, the average plug temperature drops and plugs become fouled more quickly. This, in turn, can increase fuel consumption by 4% to 5%. Excessive idling can also allow water to condense in the vehicle's exhaust, which can lead to corrosion and reduce the life of the exhaust system. (Source: Natural Resources Canada.)

Excessive idling can cause damage to both gasoline and diesel powered engines.

Idling Myth No. 3: Shutting off and restarting your vehicle is hard on the engine and uses more fuel.

Frequent restarting has little impact on engine components such as the battery and starter motor. Component wear-and-tear caused by restarting the engine is estimated to add \$10 per year to the cost of driving - money that will likely be recovered several times over in fuel savings from reduced idling.

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