



Car maintenance

Many motorists don't realise summer heat can be just as hard on cars as the chill of winter. Modern cars largely cope fine with summer weather and driving conditions. However, a few things can crop up – some are nothing to worry about, while others you should be mindful of.

Don't worry about:

Pools of water under your car - these are caused by condensed water from the air conditioning system

Smoke from air vents - unless the smoke is acrid, it's just water vapour produced by the air conditioning unit that hasn't had time to condense.

Roaring from the engine bay - this is the cooling fan turning on and off.

Less power - If your car seems more lethargic in summer, this is probably because the air is warmer and less dense, giving the engine a little less "oomph".

On the flipside, you should be aware of the following:

Tyres – high temperatures and under-inflation exacerbate existing damage and weak spots, increasing the risk of punctures. Before setting off, check tyre condition and pressures on your vehicle, as well as anything you might be towing.

Overheating – check your coolant reservoir, look for wet or white marks on coolant hoses and listen for the fan when your engine is idle. If you think anything's amiss, have it looked at ASAP.

Fuel efficiency – use a roof box and close windows on the motorway to reduce drag; start air conditioning when doors and windows are closed, and turn it off when the car has cooled; and increase tyre pressure if you're carrying extra passengers.

Glare – keep glass clean, repair scratches and chips, and wear non light-reactive sunglasses.

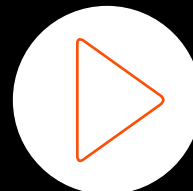
Did you know?

The onset of hay fever can prove dangerous for drivers – if you sneeze at 70mph you lose your vision for as much as 100 metres! Research from Halfords suggests 27% of UK drivers suffer from symptoms, and one in three admit to being distracted by hay fever.

There are numerous remedies available to help (always choose a non-drowsy form when driving), and wearing sunglasses, keeping a tissue to hand and closing air vents and windows can make your journey more comfortable.



RAC



Easy under-the-bonnet checks

