

8 Step Guide to Changing Your Car Engine Oil

A wannabe-grease monkey's guide to changing your oil.

Changing the oil is one of the most important things you can do for your car. Regularly changing the oil is a key part of good car maintenance - it helps the engine run smoother, live longer, and will improve performance.

Old oil clogs up critical parts of your car and could eventually cause engine failure, which can cost hundreds, even thousands, of pounds to put right.

Lots of car owners never get around to changing the oil themselves, preferring instead to leave it to a garage mechanic. But performing an oil change is actually quite a straightforward thing to do, and if you DIY you'll save yourself money.

Ideally you should change the car's oil every 3,000-6,000 miles (check your handbook for recommended mileage), and here's what you'll need if tackling the job yourself.

Oil Change Essentials

- * Two wheel ramps
- * Wedges
- * Oil pan
- * Old rag
- * Clothes you don't mind getting dirty
- * Latex gloves (or similar)
- * New engine oil
- * New oil filter
- * Oil filter wrench
- * Combination spanner

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1. Run the engine for a few minutes as warm oil drains easier than cold oil. If the car's been running for a while, allow time for the engine to cool down sufficiently as hot oil can scald.
2. Unless you drive a monster truck, you'll need to raise the car. Position a pair of suitably robust wheel ramps on a level surface. Carefully drive the car forward until the front wheels are squarely on the ramps. Engage the handbrake, switch off the engine, and leave the car in first gear (or 'Park' if automatic). Place wedges behind the back tyres for added safety. Note: Never use two jacks to prop up a car; they are simply not stable enough. Wheel ramps are readily available at stores such as Halfords.
3. With your gloves on (to protect your skin from harmful chemicals in the oil), slide underneath the car and locate the oil drain plug on the engine. Consult your owner manual for the exact location. Place the oil pan underneath.
4. Loosen the plug with the spanner and finish removing it by hand. Be prepared for a rush of oil. Again, it's essential not to do this when the engine is too hot. Once all the oil has drained away, firmly replace the plug.
5. Next change the oil filter. Pop the car bonnet and secure. Locate the oil filter and use an oil filter wrench to unscrew it. Take the new filter and put a thin layer of oil around the rubber seal to help protect the filter. Screw the new filter in place by hand and tighten.

6. Remove the oil filler cap on top of the engine. Place the funnel over the hole (some oil bottles come with an integral funnel) and pour in the new oil. Refer to the owner manual for the oil capacity and check levels are correct by using the dipstick. Replace the oil cap.

7. Put the car in neutral and start the engine. Visually check for any leaks under the car. If there are, stop the engine, put it back in gear, and then make sure all seals are properly tightened.

8. Dispose of the waste oil correctly. Take it to a garage or petrol station with a recycling point.

Voila! You have now [changed the engine oil](#) and may boast to your friends about your impressive grease monkey credentials.

About the Author

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