

Today we're going to be discussing something near and dear to all of us, especially RV owners. How can you improve your fuel economy? The 99 cents a gallon days are long gone. It took a while but as with everything else you eventually accept the fact that higher fuel prices are here to stay.

I for one am not going to let sky rocketing fuel prices change my plans for using and enjoying our RV. So, with that said and a motor home that averages 7 to 8 miles to a gallon I am forced to find ways to save on fuel rather than waiting and hoping that fuel prices will go down. After a little research I was surprised to learn how easy it can be to improve our fuel economy. Whether you're towing a trailer or driving a motor home there are many ways to improve fuel economy. By performing some simple maintenance procedures and changing our driving habits a little we can save a significant amount of fuel.

One shocking discovery was that for each 5mph you go over 60mph is equivalent to paying 10 cents more per gallon. So if you're traveling down the Interstate at 75 mph add 30 cents to the price on the pump! Wow, that can add up quick.

### **So how can we improve our fuel economy?**

- ✓ Talk to other RVers that have a motor home or tow vehicle and trailer similar to yours. Compare gas mileage. If there is a significant difference compare notes and try to determine what makes the difference.
- ✓ Something as simple as a clean air filter can improve your fuel economy up to 10%.
- ✓ Checking and adjusting your tire pressure to the proper pressure can increase fuel economy by 3%, not to mention preventing premature tire wear and failures or blowouts caused by over or under-inflated tires. Tires can look normal when they are seriously under-inflated. Use a quality air pressure gauge and check your tires when they're cold, before traveling more than one mile.
- ✓ Excessive idling wastes fuel. If you're going to be sitting still for more than a couple of minutes shut the engine off.
- ✓ Using overdrive whenever you can saves fuel by decreasing the engines speed.
- ✓ Using the cruise control whenever possible saves fuel because it keeps the vehicle at a constant speed rather than variable speeds. This applies when you are driving on a relatively flat surface. Keep in mind the over 60 mph rule applies here too.
- ✓ Keeping the vehicle tuned up and in top running condition saves fuel. A poorly tuned engine can lower fuel economy by 10 to 20%.
- ✓ Poor emissions and/or a faulty oxygen sensor can cause a 40% reduction in fuel economy. Can you believe that? A 40% REDUCTION.

- ✓ Following the recommended service and maintenance schedules will save you fuel.
- ✓ Using the recommended grade of motor oil will increase fuel economy by 1 to 2%.
- ✓ Using synthetic oils will increase fuel economy by 2% or more.
- ✓ Speeding and rapid acceleration reduces fuel economy anywhere from 5 to 33% depending on your individual driving habits.
- ✓ Added weight that you don't need reduces fuel economy significantly. We're all guilty of this one!
- ✓ Only using the dash air conditioner when it is absolutely necessary will save a significant amount of fuel.
- ✓ Use regular gas unless your owner's manual specifies a higher octane gas. You're just throwing money away when you pay the extra money for premium fuel.

Do you know how many miles you get to a gallon of gas? Here's how to find out. Fill the fuel tank and write down the odometer reading. The next time you stop for gas fill the tank again. Now divide the miles you traveled between fill ups by the amount of gas you bought the second time you filled up. This is how many miles you are getting to a gallon of gas. We may have no control over the prices at the pump, but as you can see we have total control over getting the most out of the fuel we put in our tank.

*Happy Camping,  
Mark*

Mark Polk is the owner of RV Education 101. RV Education 101 is a North Carolina based company that produces professional training videos, DVDs and e-books on how to use and maintain your RV. Our goal is to make all of your RV experiences safe, fun and stress free. [www.rveducation101.com](http://www.rveducation101.com)