

# On the right road to eco fuel success

**EVERY man thinks he can drive like Michael Schumacher but eco driving could be the key to helping to save fuel.**

While the cost of diesel and petrol continues to rise, a driving school instructor from Burbage has expressed concern about how to absorb the rising cost of fuel, but has also issued some tips on how to reduce fuel consumption.

Following a report in The Hinckley Times three weeks ago about the rising cost of fuel Hayley Noden of Pass You Driving School took reporter Ed Stilliard out onto the road to show him how to add more miles to the gallon.

And he found that by doing so he could save £165 every year.

**CAREERING round corners like Jason Bourne is a bad habit I really should learn to get out of.**

Since I passed my driving test last year, many of the tips I learned about eco-driving have been forgotten so it was good that I had the chance to re-learn how to reduce my fuel consumption and save more than £100 per year.

So off I go in Hayley Noden's Mini - a car which has the added feature of turning itself off when in neutral - and then found myself doing a six-mile circuit which would take 15 minutes.

First thing to think about - don't career down the road thinking it's Bullitt. Hinckley isn't San Francisco by anyone's standards and over-revving engines like it's a drag race isn't necessary neither.

People might think you need to have a Toyota Prius but it really isn't the case - even my beloved

Ford Mustang, I mean Fiesta, can use little fuel on the road by following just a few simple rules.

Before setting off make sure the car has as little weight in it as possible - get rid of anything you don't need - and that the tyre pressure is at the correct calibration.

If you don't need air conditioning then don't use it - doing so uses up 12% of your fuel. Keep the heater controls set at cold until the engine reaches an efficient working temperature - drag is caused if the windows are open when the car is travelling at more than 40mph.

After doing one circuit as I normally would, Hayley showed me where I was going wrong before I then had another attempt at eco-driving.



■ Ed Stilliard and driving instructor Hayley Noden before his eco driving lesson, OS0702111Driv-01



Rolling to stops, using as little of the accelerator as possible is the only way to go. Putting the car into higher gears at the right time is the key but make sure the engine doesn't have to labour.

And there's no need to go over the speed limit. If you plan ahead, use the route with the least traffic and avoid built-up areas - you can get there in the same amount of time and with less fuel.

Sometimes there's no need to rush.

As I was going down Upper Bond Street, I was told that allowing the car to roll and not dramatically breaking at the lights, not pulling the car into those corners like The Stig, could save the pennies.

And pennies make pounds.

With eco-driving I am able to save around £121 per year, working on an average of 12,000 miles.

But a second attempt, without our photographer Owen (who isn't heavy, I should add), showed that I could save another £44 per year, making a total of £165.

## FACT FILE

### How to use less fuel

1. Hazard awareness and planning - early recognition of hazards means your vehicle is travelling at the correct speed, avoiding unnecessary stops.
2. Choosing your speed - adhere to the correct speed limit, exceeding by a few miles per hour will increase fuel consumption.
3. Starting and moving off - avoid over-revving the engine when starting and move off smoothly. Keep heater controls set at cold until the engine reaches an efficient working temperature.
4. The accelerator - use smoothly and progressively, when appropriate take your foot off the accelerator and use the car's momentum to carry you forward. Wear thin soled shoes, thick soles makes sensitive use of foot controls more difficult.
5. Selecting gear - don't always change up or down gears in sequence. Skipping gears, using the highest possible gear without making the engine labour, will conserve fuel.
6. Engine braking - with the foot off the accelerator, the engine needs very little fuel, so use whenever possible.
7. Engine power - modern engines are very sophisticated and deliver power even when revs are low. It is possible to make use of higher gears at lower speeds. Turn the engine off when stationary.
8. Route planning - avoid known hold-ups and roadworks. Fuel is wasted if you get lost - so don't. Consider a car share.
9. Parking - always ensure that you can drive forward after being parked. Manoeuvring when the engine is cold is fuel inefficient.
10. Servicing and vehicle checks - your vehicle should be serviced and maintained regularly. Tyres should always be at the correct pressure. Incorrectly inflated tyres increase fuel consumption. Avoid carrying unnecessary weight; remove roof and cycle racks when not in use.

