

For Eco-Tip 2-3-19

**Commemorating Oil Spill with Actions that Matter:
*Driving Style, Frequency, Mechanic Options, Re-refined and Synthetic***

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Events last week marked the 50th anniversary of the Santa Barbara Oil Spill. Those who responded to memories of this environmental tragedy by advocating for less future drilling along our coasts may also be interested in ways we can reduce our consumption of petroleum, the driving force behind efforts to drill for more.

Drive less: The Ventura County Transportation Commission web site – www.goventura.org – has trip planners you can use to plan car-free journey, along with information about local travel by bus, train and bicycle.

Reduce drag: Stay aerodynamic – removing a roof-top cargo box can save as much as 20% on fuel, according to the web site of non-profit Money Advice Service. Drive slower – Although top gears are more efficient than low gears, once you get to top gear, adding speed greatly reduces efficiency. Driving 60 mph instead of 70 on a 20-mile highway commute saves “about 1.3 gallons of gas in a five-day work week,” according to the AAA web site. Other driving advice includes regular maintenance, keeping tires properly inflated, and reducing braking and acceleration by leaving sufficient space between yourself and the car ahead.

Change oil as needed: Google “3,000 mile myth” and read some of the over 2 million responses, most disputing the common misconception regarding the need to change every car’s oil at least every 3,000 miles. Ted Harvey, Service Manager of Meineke Car Care in Oxnard, urges consumers to follow the schedule in their car’s owner’s manual instead.

Use a real mechanic: For oil changes, go to a service station that recycles used oil, not to someone who offers to change your oil for you but might dump it. According a 2000 report by San Francisco State University (available on the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery website), over 50% of illegally disposed oil is dumped by people who do not have an official oil changing business but change oil for others outside their own household.

Alternative to crude oil: 42 gallons of crude oil makes only half a gallon of auto lubricant oil, but 42 gallons of recycled oil makes 34 gallons of lubricant, according to the web site of Nexlube, a re-refinery. In Ventura County, SC Fuels distributes the Castrol Eco brand, and Silvas Petroleum distributes Roundtrip, made in Los Angeles by Lubricating Specialties Corporation. Oil does not wear out; it just gets dirty. Re-refining recycled oil, and replenishing additives, makes it as good as oil made from crude. Although 18 service stations in Ventura County offered re-refined oil 15 years ago, none do today. However, when the price of crude oil rises, you may be able to ask again for re-refined.

Synthetic oil is another option. Although requiring petroleum for production, synthetic can make an engine operate more efficiently and lasts about three times longer than conventional oil, according to the web site of Advance Auto Parts.

used oil collection centers: <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/UsedOil/CertifiedCenters/>

oil change interval database: <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/UsedOil/OilChange/>