

Information

Desk

By Kate Duffy for the Consumer Affairs Office, Mike Gortenburg Lawrence VW

There are lots of VWs running around Lawrence. If you're planning to buy one or already own one, here are a few helpful hints about caring for your car.

The most important item is keeping your car's oil clean. If the oil is dirty, then chances are your engine will be dirty. Newer volks need to have their oil changed every 3000 miles and not a mile more. If you own a tired, worn out volkswagen, then you should get to it every 1500 miles. Because the VW is air cooled (which means there's no radiator), changing the oil makes for a cooler, smoother running engine.

When its time for an oil change, then its also time to have the valves adjusted. For older models this is especially important because nothing will make an engine blow faster than tight valves (except maybe no oil).

Always listen to your car. If you hear strange noises, then your car is trying to tell you something and you should definitely listen. You can avoid major problems often times, by being in

tune with your car and knowing its regular, healthy sounds.

If you have the time, its a good thing to learn to do some of your own repairs. James Gang in North Lawrence is a good place to buy tools and parts. The Volkswagen Idiot Book by John Muir is an ok guide to have around. It lists the tools that are needed for each repair job and a basic how-you-do-it. Sometimes its not simple enough for beginners to grasp but in many areas, its very good.



"DRIVE AND TELL"

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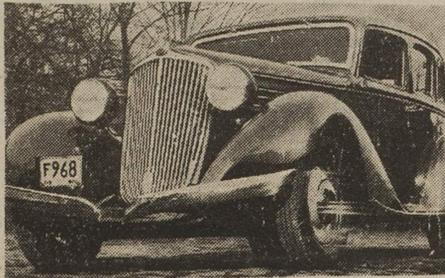
These are a few simple tests you can do to check out an used car you might wish to buy. For the complete list, contact the Consumer Affairs Offices.

--Wheel bearings or suspension joints: shake each front wheel hard in and out at the top. If wheel has a lot of free play or makes clunking sounds, wheel bearings or suspension joints may need replacing.

--Transmission check: run car in all gears. Automatic transmissions should shift without lurching or laboring; manual transmissions should not chatter, jerk or stick. Neither should groan or howl.

--Frame, wet tires, then drive car straight and look at the tracks. If there are four lines instead of two, the frame may have been bent in an accident.

- Wear on tires: if uneven, could indicate need for balancing or alignment.
- Brakes: press steadily on pedal to a count of 60; if pedal sinks slowly there may be a brake fluid leak.
- Shocks: bounce one corner of car up and down; when you let go, car should go up and down, then stop in a middle position. If it bounces more than that, shocks need replacing.



--Different color paint inside hood or trunk and around doors (could indicate car has been repainted after an accident.)

--Fluid leaks: park on smooth clean concrete surface and let car idle for about five minutes, then move it and check for drips. Red oil indicates leaking transmission fluid; black drips are usually from engine oil, and gas drips evaporate, leaving a brownish stain.

--Drive down a small hill with foot off accelerator, then step on pedal hard and watch exhaust smoke. Heavy blue smoke indicates expensive engine repair is needed; black smoke means the fuel mixture is too rich.

--Steering: check for too much play or squealing noises.

CHECK

- Your Brakes
- Your Tires
- Your Lights
- Your Batteries
- Your Radiator

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