

Frequently Asked Questions

- When does my car need an oil change?
 - A good general idea is to change it every 3,000 miles. However, you should really follow your vehicle manufacturer's specifications. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at [Van Nuys Autoworks](#).
- What do the numbers on the oil mean and why do I care?
 - The first number indicates how the oil will act at a low temperature. More specifically, it is the viscosity. Viscosity is the thickness of a liquid. It is basically how much that fluid resists flowing. High viscosity, like that in honey, makes it flow a lot slower than water, which has a lower viscosity. The lower the number the easier the oil will flow at low temperatures. This makes it easier for the car to turn over to start. The second number reveals how the viscosity is at a higher temperature when the car is running. You should follow your manufacturer's specifications.
- Should I use synthetic motor oil in my car?
 - Synthetic motor oil is a good choice when you have a high output, turbocharged or supercharged engines. They are also recommended for vehicles used for towing, and for vehicles that operate in extreme temperatures.
- Why is my engine oil milky brown?
 - Milky brown is an indication of coolant in the oil. This could be from a blown gasket, a failed transmission cool, or a cracked casing. Either way, bring it in to Van Nuys Autoworks for an [oil change and a check up](#).
- Why are my brakes squeaking?
 - There are many reasons for squeaking, but continuous squeals and grinding are an indication of worn brake pads. Worn brakes mean longer stopping distances and trouble stopping in emergency situations.
- Do I need to go to the dealer to do maintenance in order to keep my car warranty?
 - No, you can service your car anywhere they have a qualified facility or person. You want to keep all the receipts as proof of completion and have your mechanic fill out the Maintenance Record.
- How often should I rotate my tires?

- The general rule of thumb is every 6,000 miles, or every other oil change. However, you should follow what the manufacturer says.
- What is the main cause of tire damage?
 - Many things in the road can cause tire damage, such as glass, nails and potholes, but improper maintenance can lead to severe tire damage. Improper inflation, balancing and non rotated tires are some of the common maintenance problems people don't address.
- Is it important to change the timing belt?
 - It is very critical to change the timing belt. If it fails while running, it can cause massive damage to the engine. It is a lot cheaper to change the belt before it breaks your engine. You should change you timing belt between 60,000 and 120,000 miles, or according to your manufacturer directions.
- What happens if the engine is overheating in traffic?
 - Don't panic. Turn on the heater which draws heat from the engine and gas it a little bit. If the gauge is reading in the danger zone, you should pull over to the side and wait for the motor to cool. Most engines shouldn't overheat, so you should check the cooling system.
- How often should I change my spark plugs?
 - Experienced mechanics suggest that you change the newer cars ever 30,000 miles, thought that depends on your car and the type of spark plugs. On the older cars, it would be best to change them every 12,000 – 15,000 miles. There are some that say they can go upwards of 60,000 miles, but it is always better to be safe than sorry.
- When should I replace my belts and hoses?
 - If you can see any cracks in them, have the belt and hose replaced immediately. We recommend replacing them about ever three to four years.
- What does it mean when the "check engine" light comes on?
 - The car has many electrical systems operating and monitoring your cars performance. The car may seem to run fine, but it is better to have the issue address soon to prevent a long-term problem later.
- When should I replace my fuel filter?
 - The general rule is 30,000 miles, but you should follow your manufacturer instructions.

Please do not hesitate to call us at **Van Nuys Autoworks: (818) 781-1111** for any further questions.