

Small Car Fixing On A Survival Budget

When it comes to preparing for survival, there is no question that your car will form a key part of your plans.

No matter whether you wind up living in it for some time, or you have many things to carry to a new location, [keeping your vehicle fit and running is very important](#). During each stage of preparing your car for post-crisis living, always keep in mind that what you have on hand may be all you will have for making repairs or replacing parts.

Without a question, knowing how to build, rebuild, and scavenge parts will be every bit as important as making use of alternative fuels.

Always Be Ready for a Long Trip

Perhaps it is fair to say that if you would not trust your car to go from one coast of the country to the other regardless of weather conditions, then your vehicle is not ready for driving in a crisis.

Here are some very important things to keep in mind and be ready for during a crisis:

- You will most likely be caught in massive traffic jams or re-routes. This is the time when your vehicle is most likely to overheat, blow a head gasket, or develop other problems related to excessive idling. Always make sure that the engine cooling system is in perfect condition. Examine the radiator for leaks, keep antifreeze on hand, check oil levels, and keep extra oil and air filters on hand.

- Carbon monoxide always builds up inside the vehicle. Get used to keeping windows open and turning off the air conditioning and heat. Not only will you save gas, but you will experience less stress and exhaustion caused by toxic fume buildup.
- Keep tires, brakes, blinkers, lights, and exhaust system in good repair. If the transmission slips or the engine knocks, get these things taken care of or replace the vehicle as quickly as possible. For those fortunate enough to own a vehicle with a manual transmission, replace the clutch if it is worn or shows signs of wearing. A few dollars on this one replacement can truly make a huge difference in a crisis.
- Take your car on at least one 100 mile non-stop trip per week. This will burn up carbon deposits in the engine and also give the rubber in tires a good chance to be kneaded (which in turn reduces the tendency to develop cracks).

Build an Emergency Repair Kit

You should always [keep a set of auto repair tools in the trunk of your vehicle](#).

This includes a good quality jack, tire iron, wrenches, rubber mallet, sledge hammer, socket set, jumper cables, torque wrench, spare fuses, wire, cable, lubricant, and extra rags. It will also be of some help to keep a can of tire flat fixant, and a few extra quarts of oil.

Learn These 10 Basic Repair Skills

If you are concerned about vehicle breakdowns during a crisis, here are 10 diagnostic and repair skills you should master. While other and more complicated things may develop, being ready to handle these 10 issues on your own can still go a long way:

1. Change and rotate tires.



2. Change oil, oil filter, and air filter.

3. Change brake pads and bleed brake lines.

4. Check battery, spark plug, and distributor connections.

5. Gap spark plugs, change them, and evaluate timing.

6. Replace engine head gasket and torque engine head bolts.

7. Solder radiator and repair minor leaks.

8. Replace alternator, starter, and test/replace belt systems.

9. Wire up dragging mufflers and exhaust system pipes.

10. Diagnose and replace fuses.

Practice Driving Skills for Your Car Protection

The most important part of automobile survival repair revolves around taking proper care of yourself. This includes honing your driving skills and eliminating bad habits that either waste gas or make you a danger to yourself and others.

In particular, if you chat on the cell phone, send text messages, or watch TV while driving, then you need to get rid of these habits. During an emergency, tapping into these devices can make you easy to detect by radar scans, and also make it harder to deal with panicking people that will drive recklessly.

Get in the habit of focusing 100% on driving now, and the ability to concentrate and drive safely will be there when you need it during a crisis.

Other skills to practice include:

- Staying calm in traffic jams. Keep a CD of relaxing music on hand that you can use for these situations
- Keep yourself well rested and in good condition to drive.
- [Practice high speed driving in high traffic volume.](#) Start out at a local racetrack so you don't get a ticket. If you are white knuckled driver on the thruway or in high stress situations, build up your skills in a quiet setting and learn how to cope instead of get in everyone else's way.
- The most proper and efficient ways to merge, pass, make turns.
- Learn how to use your blinkers and hazards (trust me, every vehicle comes out of the factory with all lights functional).
- Practice driving in the snow, sleet, and rain.
- Skids, U-turns, 3 point turns, and parallel parking.
- Find your vehicles mileage "sweet spot" and try to hold that speed without relying on cruise control.
- Rough terrain or off road driving.
- If you have never driven a vehicle with a manual transmission, take the time now to do so. This will teach you more about engine sounds, speed awareness, and many other things that tend to be missed when driving with an automatic transmission.

Many people will wind up abandoning their car because it breaks down long before gas becomes unavailable.

If you are able to diagnose and repair some of the more common problems, then you will have a much better chance of reaching any chosen destination and also keeping your car operational for a longer period of time.

Needless to say, if you are one of the successful people that manages to survive a world gone mad, then you can always look to modifying your car to use different fuel types.

How to survive an economic meltdown

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*This article has been written by **Carmela Tyrell** for [Survivopedia](#).*