

SOUNDS THAT INDICATE YOUR CAR NEEDS MAINTENANCE



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We've all been there: You're traveling down the road when suddenly, your vehicle makes a sound that sends a shock through your body. Your brow furrows as you quickly scan the dash for a warning light to appear. Is it the brakes? A problem with the engine? What kind of repair will I need?

Relax—there's no need to panic. The best thing you can do is schedule an appointment with your local service center and have the sound checked out by an experienced professional. Delaying or simply ignoring the noise can quickly lead to further damage or worse, an accident.

To help you figure out exactly what your vehicle is trying to tell you with its sounds, this eBook has everything you'll need, including how to avoid more serious issues down the road. Inside, you'll learn how to identify some of the most common noises as well as what steps you can take to keep your vehicle running at peak performance.

Let's get started!



Squeaking, Thumping, and Grinding: What Your Brakes Are Trying to Tell You

Your vehicle's braking system is the single most vital piece of safety equipment in your vehicle. Knowing this, it's easy to understand the importance of having them routinely inspected for signs of wear or damage.

While your personal driving habits and local road conditions can play a significant role in the longevity of your brakes, typically, you'll want to **plan on having your brake pads, calipers, and rotors replaced every 30,000 to 50,000 miles**. A simple way to plan for this important maintenance task is to have them inspected each time you go in for an oil change or tire rotation.

If you live in an area that receives periods of heavy rain, you might experience your brakes making a high-pitched squeal when first pulling out of the driveway. This is caused by wet rotors and isn't cause for any alarm. Should your brakes continue to make this sound, however, it might be time for a checkup.

- **Squeaking** - Most brake pads are embedded with a small strip of metal that, when exposed, emits a sharp squeal as it rubs against the rotor. If you notice this sound every time you apply the brakes, it's most likely your brake pads telling you that it's time to have them replaced.
- **Grinding or scraping** - The most common culprit of this sound is either warped or damaged rotor blades. This can also be the result of rust buildup, which results in a metal-on-metal grinding sound emanating from inside your wheel wells.
- **Thumping** - This sound is sometimes difficult to diagnose, but usually easy to fix. If you notice a low thumping sound coming from the back tires, it's a good sign that your rear drums are worn and need to be replaced.

There is another issue that might be causing strange noises to come from your vehicle that's directly connected to your brakes: your vehicle's alignment.

Your alignment is what holds your wheels in place and keeps them pointing in the right direction. If you frequently ride over rough roads or recently popped over a high curb, this can damage your alignment, making it harder to steer or effectively brake. If you notice that your vehicle pulls to one side when you apply the brakes, you should have the vehicle inspected right away.

Pro Tip #1: Don't Ignore Your Tires

There's no denying the importance that a sturdy set of tires plays in keeping your braking system healthy. Worn-out or damaged tires can increase the burden placed on your vehicle's brakes, in turn increasing the likelihood of parts wearing down more quickly.

A simple way to measure the health of your tires' tread is by performing the penny test. Insert a regular penny into the tire tread with Lincoln's head facing into the tire. If all or most of his head is concealed, the tire is in good shape; if his head is fully exposed, the tire is worn and should be replaced as soon as possible.

The same test can also be performed using a quarter and repeating the same steps.

RATTLING, KNOCKING, AND CHIRPING: YOUR ENGINE'S WORST NIGHTMARE

Underneath your hood exists a complex system of parts and electronic devices working together to keep your vehicle in motion. Your engine is made up of thousands of these moving metal parts, all of which move at an incredibly high rate of speed. When a vehicle ages or isn't properly maintained, these parts tend to wear down or break, which can lead to serious performance issues.

Often, the first sign of engine trouble will start with a strange noise that originates from underneath the hood or through your vehicle's dashboard. Some of the most common sounds include:

- **Rattling** - If you notice this sound while accelerating, it might be the result of an air/fuel mixture igniting prematurely inside the cylinder. If the rattling sound is coming from underneath the vehicle, it might be a piece of the vehicle's exhaust system coming loose.
- **Knocking** - Loud knocking is caused when a connector rod becomes loose or completely breaks from the crankshaft; this is where the term "throw a rod" comes from. It's a serious issue that requires immediate attention to avoid further damaging the engine.
- **Chirping** - If it sounds like a bird is nesting under your hood, the real issue might be a timing or serpentine belt that's come loose or is damaged.
- **Ticking** - If you live in a region with long periods of cold weather, you may occasionally hear a brief ticking noise when you first start the engine. If this noise is constant, though, it might be an issue with your valve train or your hydraulic lifters sticking.



Pro Tip #2: The Importance of Changing Your Oil

Engine repairs can be quite involved and the cost can really range, so it's best to schedule an inspection at the very first sign of trouble. Speaking of trouble, one of the biggest contributors to engine wear is overheating. This happens when you skip oil changes or when extra burden is placed on your vehicle's system. Some of the most common issues include:

- **Reduced performance**
- **Overheating**
- **Lower fuel efficiency**
- **Engine seizure**

Regularly changing your oil not only helps keep your engine cool and lubricated, but makes sure that any dangerous particles that get trapped inside are properly flushed from the system. This can greatly extend the life of your vehicle, maintaining its high performance standards for many years.

ROARING, WHINING, AND GURGLING: THE SECRETS OF YOUR TRANSMISSION

Next to the engine, your vehicle's transmission is one of the most important components inside your vehicle. A broken transmission is another very involved and potentially costly repair when not covered under warranty. As such, any strange sounds you hear coming from inside your transmission indicate a serious problem that requires immediate attention.

While not a common issue among newer vehicles, older, high-mileage vehicles run a greater risk, as do vehicles that perform heavy labor, like towing trailers. Some of the more common sounds you might experience include:

- **Roaring** - If you notice your engine makes a loud "revving" sound when you step on the gas, but it fails to properly accelerate, it could be an early sign of trouble. Your transmission is what transfers the energy created inside the engine to your wheels. When there's an imbalance in output to acceleration, your transmission might be the culprit.
- **Whining** - A high-pitched whine that starts from underneath your car might be telling you of an issue within your torque converter. Your torque converter pressurizes your transmission fluid, allowing the vehicle to automatically shift gears. Without this pressure, your vehicle can end up stalling.
- **Gurgling** - Often the result of low transmission fluid, a gurgling noise indicates that excess air is slowly building up inside your transmission lines. If you notice this sound while the vehicle shifts gears, you're in danger of causing serious damage to your transmission.

Pro Tip #3: How Can I Tell if My Transmission is Slipping?

One of the most common transmission issues that drivers face is their transmission unexpectedly slipping out of gear. This most often occurs on vehicles that use an automatic transmission system, and if not immediately attended to, it could result in a serious accident.

Slipping happens when the gears inside the transmission begin to wear down, weakening their hold, which causes the transmission to suddenly shift or “slip” into a different gear. Some common signs to look out for include:

- Inability to reverse
- Sluggish acceleration
- Sudden acceleration/ deceleration
- Higher RPMs while traveling at low speeds
- Jolting or stalling

Schedule a Service Appointment Today!



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