

# Simple Stuff

## Getting Ready for Winter

by Bob Vitrikas

Putting our British rides to bed for the winter is a common place occurrence for many of our members, something that seems so simple but is very important for the car and our mental health come Spring when we are anxious to get on the road again. Here are five simple steps you can take to ensure your peace of mind.

Step 1: Put fresh gas in the tank. If you use ethanol free gas, fill the tank to the brim. Ethanol free gasoline absorbs water and filling the tank will minimize condensation on the inside of the tank as well as prevent (or slow!) rusting out your gas tank from the top down. Ask me about my \$10,000 bill to replace the tanks on my Esprit! If you use ethanol gas, fill your tank about a quarter full. Ethanol gas goes bad after a few months of sitting. Adding fresh gas in the spring will dilute the stale gas and give you a running start at the road in the spring. I always add a recommended dose of fuel stabilizer to keep my fuel as water free and fresh as possible. An ounce of prevention...

Step 2: Give your baby a good bath and cleaning inside and out. Nothing like starting out with a clean, gleaming car for that first ride in the spring. Ahhhh.

Step 3: Change the oil and filter. Fresh oil will keep the engine internals clean, protected from rust and acid free over the winter months. I always change my filter when I change the oil. Cheap insurance against contaminants getting into the engine internals and doing nasty things to them!

Step 4: Check your antifreeze to ensure it is protecting your engine. Antifreeze has additives that inhibit rust and lubricate the water pump, among other things, so make sure yours is not only the right concentration to protect against freezing but also not overdue for a change. Traditional antifreeze was only good for a couple of years. Modern mixtures are good for several years. Which does your engine have in it? Be careful to NOT MIX types of antifreeze. I once had to top off the coolant in my Jaguar (imagine that!) whilst on a road trip. Just a quart or so was needed. To my everlasting regret, I didn't pay attention to what kind of antifreeze was already in the system and I mixed antifreeze types. Not paying attention to this seemingly small detail cost me dearly. The antifreeze coagulated closing the engine, radiator and heater core. The Jag was in the repair shop for six weeks. The fix required disassembling a sizable portion of the interior and engine compartment to flush out the clogged antifreeze. Antifreeze testers are inexpensive, only \$3-\$4 at your local auto parts store. Put a tag on your radiator cap to remind you when the antifreeze was last changed AND what type was used.



Step 5: Hook up a battery maintainer, not a battery charger. They are readily obtained at your local auto parts store. Plan to spend \$30-\$50 for a decent maintainer but feel free to go all out for a top of the line maintainer for over \$100. Your battery will last longer and you can rest assured your car will start in the spring.

Step 6: Pump up those tires to keep them from flat spotting due to sitting a long time. I usually inflate mine to 50 PSI and it has served me well over the years. No thumpy thump thump when I start to drive it after winter storage. I put a sign on the windshield in front of the driver seat reminding me that the tires are over inflated.

Step 7: Roll up your windows to keep varmints out of your car. If you have a convertible top, put it up so it doesn't shrink over the winter. Keep the interior dry by putting one or two containers of "Damp Rid" on the floor. I buy mine at Lowes.

There you have it, seven simple steps to keep your ride in top shape and ready for your adventures on the road next year!

