The Fuel Additive Buying Guide

The Six Critical Signs of Good (and Bad) Fuel Additives
[#4 should be familiar]

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Introduction

There are lots of fuel additives on the market and a lot of consumer confusion. Everybody claims to be the best, so people don't know what to believe. They're all trying to make money, so everyone tries to one-up the other guy by claiming bigger and better things to set themselves apart. He says 15%? Heck, I'll make it 20%. No, I'll guarantee everyone 25% better gas mileage. No wait, I'll guarantee 30%, PLUS I'll throw in a second bottle for free (just pay processing and handling).

It's enough to make you think twice about the whole thing. If everyone is the best, then nobody is the best.

You need a source of information you can trust, and that's where we come in. We've been around since 1909 – that's going on 106 years if you're counting (and reading this in 2015). We know that there are things you can and cannot do when it comes to changing or improving the properties of fuel. Think of us as your guide to navigating the murky minefield that is the fuel additive landscape. One wrong step and your budget blows up. We're here to help make sure that doesn't happen.

In here, you'll find the straight talk on what you need to know to buy the best additive for what you need, by paying attention to six critical points measure against. We'll tell you what to look for and what to avoid, so you can make the best decision and not feel like you throwing money down the drain on something that claims the world but delivers nothing.

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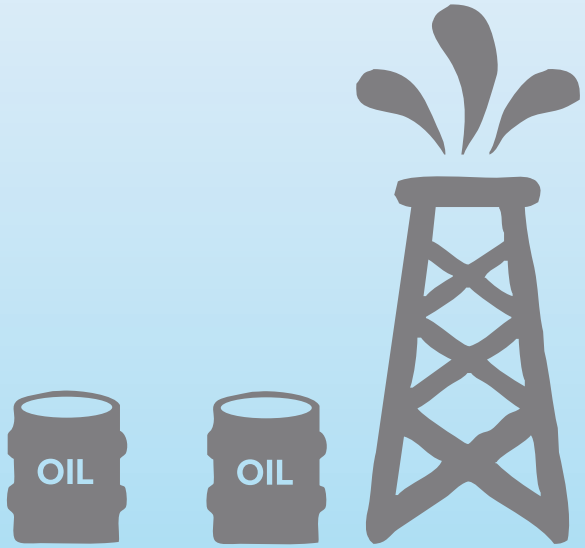

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Tip 1

No Alcohol (You Don't Solve An Alcohol Problem With More Alcohol)

Makers of additives for ethanol blends know that water is a big problem. It makes the fuel go bad more quickly in storage and contributes to corrosion and small engine damage. Because of this, many ethanol fuel treatments will claim some kind of water controlling effect, along with claims about helping ward off phase separation for ethanol blends (what happens when the alcohol separates from the gasoline because of too much water).

The easiest way to do this, if you're putting together some kind of additive, is to just use more ethanol or more alcohol. But if you're looking into a fuel treatment, you want to solve ethanol problems, not contribute to them. And you can't solve an alcohol problem by adding more alcohol.

So our tip is – **look for something that controls water but without alcohol**. There are formulations out there that will do that, and do it well. Make sure you don't see anything that looks like alcohol on the label. These can be ingredients with names like methanol, propanol, or any chemical that has "–ol" at the end of its name.

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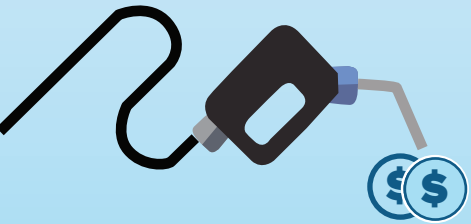
Tip 2

Reasonable Cost Per Dose (You Have To Save More Than You Pay)

You don't buy a fuel additive just for the pleasure of spending money. You're aiming to save more money than you spend. Otherwise, what's the point?

There are two main classes of fuel additives – the one-shot ones and the concentrated ones. The concentrates are the ones that are usually the best value. But many consumers don't think about things in that way. They look at total cost without considering the cost per gallon. It's fine to spend $6 or $8 on a single bottle of fuel treatment, but if that only treats one tank of gas, you'll be spending 40 or 50 cents a gallon to treat. Is it reasonable to expect to recoup that cost?



In our experience, no. Especially if you're expecting the major benefit to be better gas mileage. If gas is $2.30 a gallon and you're spending 50 cents a gallon on fuel treatment, do you really expect to get 25% better mileage. No. Or at least, you shouldn't.

So our tip is to **look for a concentrated fuel treatment that will treat more fuel at a lower cost per gallon**. It's a lot easier to come out ahead if you're only spending 10 cents a gallon than if you're having to spend 50 cents a gallon.

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Tip 3

Clean Your Engine and Raise Your Mileage (It Has To Do Both)

There are plenty of “magic potions” out there that make big claims about raising gas mileage. In reality, we know that it’s possible to achieve higher gas mileage, but it’s primarily done through a combination of using a combustion catalyst for the fuel and by cleaning out injectors and combustion chambers. If you don’t do both, you’re probably going to be disappointed by the results.

Cleaning the engine is essential to the benefits that a good fuel additive is going to give you. A new engine is going to give you the best performance you will ever get over the life of that car. It’s virtually impossible to significantly improve mileage in a new engine, because there’s nowhere to go. Engines lose performance over time because they get dirty and move away from their new condition. A legitimate fuel additive is going to help your gas mileage by cleaning out the engine and moving it back to the condition it was in when it was new and at its peak.

How do you know an additive is working? If it’s mileage you’re looking at, here are a few tips:

- Don’t rely on the mileage readout from the car’s computer. That’s more likely to be an average figure calculated from a period before you started using whatever you’re putting in your engine.
- Keep a manual mileage record instead, being careful to measure before/after mileage under the same conditions and same kind of trips both times, as much as you can control that.
- When you first use a detergent additive, you will actually notice the mileage decrease for a short time. If this happens, you know the additive IS working. The detergents will be cleaning the carbon deposits out from where they are, and these deposits would normally be burned along with the fuel. They don’t burn as seamlessly as pure fuel, hence this “cleaning cycle” gives you a small drop in mileage.
- Once the cleaning cycle is complete, you will see (if you are tracking the data) the mileage rise again, and continue to rise until it settles out at whatever benefit you are going to get. How long does a cleaning cycle take? It depends how dirty your engine is.

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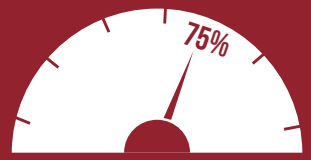
Tip 4

No Outrageous Claims (If It Seems Too Good To Be True.....)



Outrageous benefit claims are what catch people's eye. They're also what cause disappointment and turn people off about fuel additives, making them think all fuel additives are snake oil.

There are fuel additives out there that do what they claim. One of the keys to finding them is to have reasonable expectations. Yeah, it would be great if there was a magic potion that doubled your gas mileage instantaneously, but if one of those really existed, everyone would be using it.

Some examples you may have already come across (the names have been withheld to protect the guilty):

- Up to 25% fuel economy increase (So if you get no increase, they can still say their claim is true because 0% is still technically 'up to')
- Dramatically improve your fuel economy by reducing friction in your fuel system (fuel drag isn't a factor in fuel economy)
- Use a magnetic to align the gas molecules in your fuel tank and save fuel (You'd have to have a mighty powerful magnet to have any effect whatsoever on that)

So our advice on buying good fuel treatments is **not to get sucked in by claims that seem too good to be true**. Especially when it comes to gas mileage. Is it reasonable to expect 6 or 8 or 10 percent better mileage? A lot more so than expecting 50% better mileage.

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Tip 5

Protection From Ethanol's Damaging Effects

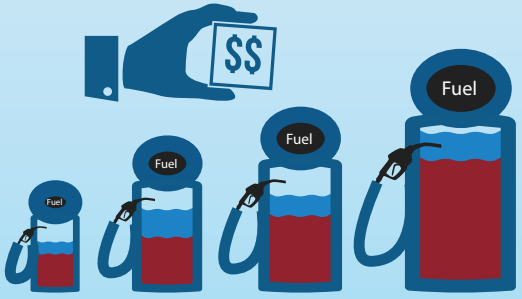
(Better Gas Mileage Doesn't Matter If Your Engine Doesn't Work)

The most common complaints against ethanol fuels usually fall into two camps:
1] "my mileage went down", or
2] "ethanol destroyed my small equipment".

The really unlucky souls will be hit by both. If you're going to buy a fuel additive to treat ethanol, **it needs to have you covered as far as protecting your equipment from things like corrosion and the softening of rubber/plastic parts.**

Fuel additives that really protect parts from ethanol damage will typically do some by using some kind of fuel-soluble boundary lubrication, laying down a layer of protection on the surfaces that coats the surfaces of rubber and polymers and protects them from reacting with ethanol.

These fuel additives should also provide corrosion protection through their water-control ingredients. A big reason why ethanol is so corrosive is because it pulls water into contact with metal parts. Any ethanol fuel additive you buy is going to need to protect against this.



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Tip 6

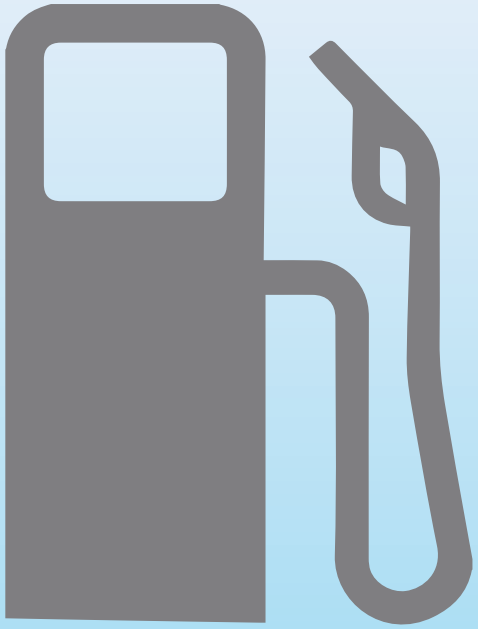
A Name You Can Trust (Longevity In The Marketplace Isn't Something You Can Buy)

It's easy to throw together a product and make an appearance in the marketplace. But it's not so easy to gain consumer trust and stick around for the long haul. That's even more true today when everyone talks to everyone else. Someone that's been in business for a long time is a lot more likely to have hit upon something that works. Those are the people you want to go with. So our final recommendation is to make sure to buy from someone who has a few decades or more of experience in the industry.

Final Thoughts

There's a lot of competition for your money when it comes to fuel additives. And people want to believe that they make good decisions, which is why unscrupulous companies make a lot of money selling worthless snake oil to unsuspecting buyers. It ruins the playing field for the legitimate companies that use proven chemistry and technology to solve fuel-related problems.

If you follow our recommendations here, you'll be a lot more likely to get what you need without being disappointed.



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