

How to Check Your Oil



Print this handy instruction sheet and keep it in your glove compartment to use during an emergency. You never know when these instructions will come in handy!

Equipment Needed

- Owner's manual
- Rag
- Funnel
- Motor oil

7 Steps to Check Your Oil

1. Check the owner's manual

Make sure you know what type of oil your car needs and how often you need to schedule an oil change. This is usually every 3000 miles or 3 months.

2. Turn off your engine and open the hood of your car

Check your oil when the engine is warm because oil will expand when it's hot and contract when it's cold.

3. Check the dipstick

Your dipstick is an instrument that measures the oil in your car. It's a long piece of metal that sticks out with a loop on it. The oil dipstick is usually in front of the engine on the left-hand side. It's usually labeled oil or has an indicator. Just pull on the loop to get the dipstick out and wipe the dipstick clean, and then put the dipstick back, all the way in. Pull it back out again.

Look at the end of the dipstick. The oil should be halfway between the textured area or the line marked "full." If the oil is lower than that, you likely need more oil.

4. Check the oil

Check where the oil is and the color. Clean oil should be amber. Feel the oil. If it feels gritty, it needs to be changed. If the oil is below the "full" line but feels clean, you can add some new oil.

5. Let the engine cool and add new oil

Once the engine is cooled, you will need a funnel and a bottle of motor oil to add new oil. If you don't have time to wait for the engine to cool, use a rag, work glove or some protective covering for your hand to unscrew the oil filler cap, which is labeled oil. If you touch the cap with your bare hands while the engine is still hot, you could burn yourself.

6. Use a funnel to pour oil

Don't put in too much oil or else you'll have to drain the oil pan and start all over.

7. Check the oil level again

Use the dipstick to make sure the oil level is full. Remember to put the dipstick back and screw the cap back on.