

Winter-proof your car!

Winter's getting colder—and who wants to deal with dangerous, icy road conditions, or a car that looks like a Popsicle when you're already late for work? Luckily, there are some easy tricks to get your car running (safely!) even in the coldest temperatures!

Keep your headlights clear with car wax!



That wintry mix of slush, snow and road salt can really do a number on your headlights. And if the stuff sticks, it can dangerously reduce your visibility. But there's an easy fix: Just wipe ordinary car wax on your headlights. It contains special water repellents that will prevent that messy mixture from accumulating on your lights, so you'll be able to get wherever you need to go this winter safely. And the protection will last for weeks!

Ice-proof your windows with vinegar!

Frost on its way? Just fill a spray bottle with three parts vinegar to one part water and spritz it on all your car windows at night. In the morning, they'll be clear of icy mess! How does it work? Vinegar contains acetic acid, which raises the melting point of water—preventing water from freezing! Wake up to an already frozen car? Just spray the mixture on your windows and watch it melt!



Squeak-proof your wipers with rubbing alcohol!

Windshield wipers squeaking, or leaving streaks that make it hard to see? Wipe them with a cloth saturated with rubbing alcohol or ammonia. "These are solvents that can cut the buildup of grease and grime, the main culprit that prevents wipers from working properly," says Sinclair. "This one trick can make badly streaking wipers change to near-perfect clarity!"



Prevent car doors from freezing shut with cooking spray!

Spritz cooking spray on the rubber seals around car doors and rub it in with a paper towel. "Doors freeze when snow melts into the seals during the day, and then freezes at night," says Robert Sinclair Jr. of AAA. But the oils in cooking spray prevent water from melting into the rubber in the first place!



De-ice your lock in seconds with hand sanitizer!

Can't get your key in the lock on a frozen morning? Just put some hand sanitizer gel on the key and the lock, and the problem's solved! Why? Because hand sanitizers contain alcohol, the main ingredient in most commercial de-icers! Just make sure you carry a sanitizer that's at least 60% alcohol. Sanitizers with less alcohol won't work (and guess what: They won't sanitize your hands, either!).



Fog-proof your windshield with shaving cream!

"Shaving cream creates a protective film on the glass that prevents fogging," explains Ricardo Rodriguez-Long of Uniroyal Tire. "Spray some on the inside of your windshield and wipe it off with paper towels." Why does it work? Shaving cream has many of the same ingredients found in commercial defoggers.



—Rosemarie Lennon

Get unstuck from the snow with your floor mat!

You've no doubt heard you should keep a bag of kitty litter or sand in your trunk to use for traction if you get stuck on ice. But don't panic if you forgot to buy any, assures Amy Marentic, Ford Motors car expert. "Just turn off the car, and stick the rubber side of one of your floor mats under the spinning tire," she says. "Turn the car back on, put your foot on the gas, and it will provide the grip you need to get going!"



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