

New car? Things to avoid for engine longevity

By  Ané Theron

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So, you've made the big decision, put down your deposit, and you finally get to drive that brand-new car home. But did you know that even the slightest early 'mistreatment' can lead to engine problems later? Here are some things to avoid while that new-car-smell is still fresh in your nostrils.



- **Do not floor the accelerator.** Putting strain on your engine during the break-in period is not recommended. Consult the manual to find out how many kilometres the break-in period is for your specific car. Light throttle application is key.
- **Do not shift gears at redline.** Not pushing your new car over 4000rpm is advised. Even performance vehicles such as the Nissan GT-R should not be driven hard for the first 300 miles and Nissan doesn't recommend giving over 50 percent of throttle. Some performance vehicles (such as the Acura NSX) undergo the engine break-in process in the factory, so it's ready for the race track by the time it reaches its owner.
- **Don't use cruise control.** You want to vary your new engine's RPM as much as possible, so your engine gets used to different loads and conditions. If you are setting off on a lengthy road trip with your brand-new wheels, have plenty of coffee breaks or consciously drive at different speeds.

- **Avoid short distance travel.** Rather walk to the corner shop for a litre of milk. In the early stages of ownership, it's important for your new car's engine to reach operating temperature every time you drive somewhere.
- **Don't tow that boat to the dam.** Towing anything during the break-in period is harmful as it also causes engine strain.

ABOUT ANÉ THERON

Ané Theron started her career in motoring journalism at Rapport, and moved over to City Press after a few years, before settling into a full time career at AutoTrader SA. She's at her happiest driving along twisty coastal roads, or crawling across rugged terrain in a beefy 4x4, or driving through the desolate Karoo. And taking photos along the way, of course.

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