

Green Earth



Should You EV Swap a Classic Car?

There is an unmistakable appeal to the idea of blending the quality and craftsmanship of a classic car with the modern eco-consciousness of an electric engine.

An EV swap in the current market, however, has significant drawbacks that make the project impractical (and potentially unsafe) for most owners.

You might be drawn to an EV conversion for personal or environmental reasons. Perhaps your classic car has been in the family for generations but you want increased fuel economy. Perhaps you're looking to upgrade your driving experience with the instant torque that comes with an EV.

THE PRICE TAG

While the project might seem, at a glance, to be easily doable, the devil is in the details. Major components, such as the engine, can be readily available at a relatively affordable price. GM sells an eCrate, which includes the motor and batteries service techs need to convert most conventional combustion engines.

But Motor Trend recommends you add up a host of other costs, as well. The price tag of a conversion soars when you figure in the costs of the equipment and labor needed



© ADOBE STOCK

to power up the vehicle's other, more specialized components. This includes systems such as power steering, heating and air conditioning and power braking.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Consider the non-financial costs, as well. You might have to give up features (such as power

steering) or space (due to a trunk full of batteries) to make the swap feasible. Then there is the environmental cost. If you figure in the carbon footprint of manufacturing the parts and equipment you'll need to make the swap, the environmental impact might not be as positive as you'd imagined.

Keep safety a top concern.

EV systems are powered by components and cables with voltages up to 1,000, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, which could cause a fatal electric shock. This makes the job potentially dangerous, and hiring a professional trained to work with these systems will be pricey.

Steven Rupp, a writer for

Motor Trend, completed an EV swap on a '57 Chevy project car. The downsides to the project led Rupp to label an EV swap this way: "unless you have Tony Stark money, financially irresponsible." Rupp concludes, "Besides, our classics and hot rods are sensory escapes for us, and losing that V-8 rumble just kills part of [that] joy."

Vacations and the Environment

The U.S. economy's biggest source of greenhouse gases is transportation, and the U.S. is the second biggest source of greenhouse gases in the world, reports the Washington Post. If you're looking to shrink your carbon footprint, consider changing the way you travel.

That doesn't necessarily mean skipping vacation altogether. Making smart decisions about travel can go a long way toward reducing the impact on the environment.

SHOULD YOU SKIP VACATION?

In 2019, Washington Post climate reporter Sarah Kaplan wrote that "canceling a single round-trip ticket on a trans-Atlantic flight saves the equivalent carbon dioxide emission as the average citizen of India emits all year, according to a 2017 study published in the journal Environmental Research Letters."

If you're thinking of skipping vacation altogether to limit your environmental impact, however, think twice. According to the Harvard Business Review, studies show



© ADOBE STOCK

that our job performance takes a hit when we work for extended periods without a break, while vacationing boosts our productivity, creativity and mental health, and lowers stress.

TRAVEL SMART

Instead of canceling your vacation, make climate-wise decisions about how you travel. Many major carriers and travel websites now list a flight's expected emissions level during the booking pro-

cess. This means you can choose your flight based on its potential effect on the environment. You might have to pay a little more or adjust your travel plans slightly to contribute toward a safer, healthier planet.

Choose airlines that have committed to using sustainable aviation fuel. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, this fuel is made from non-petroleum feedstocks and is used with up to a 50% mix of regular jet

fuel. SAF can reduce emissions by up to 80% during its full life cycle, according to aviation firm i6 Group. As of 2024, airlines using SAF include British Airways, Delta Airlines, KLM, United Airlines, Virgin Atlantic, Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, British Airways, Finnair, Japan Airlines and Qatar Airways.

To reduce your impact, be conscious of the kind of vacation you choose and the location to which you travel.

Brightly.com ranks five types of travel from least to most impact on the environment. It found staycations to be the most eco-friendly, followed by camping, ski trips and beach vacations, with cruises ranked last with the most negative effects on the environment.

Of course, it's no surprise that staying closer to home saves not just energy and thus emissions but also money. It's also a good way to spend your money locally and help spur your community's economy.

Smart Growth

If you've seen live/work developments popping up in your area — particularly those that advertise themselves as “walkable” — you've likely witnessed “smart growth.”

Smart growth is more than just an environmental and real estate buzzword. It's an urban planning and transportation theory that reimagines how we live and work to limit our negative impact on the environment.

WHAT IS IT?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, smart growth is “an overall approach of development and conservation strategies that can help protect our health and natural environment and make our communities more attractive, economically stronger, socially diverse and resilient to climate change.”

Done properly, smart growth can improve air quality, have positive effects on climate change and water quality, conserve open space and redevelop abandoned or underused commercial and industrial buildings that have issues with contamination or blight.

Smart Growth America puts it this way, “We envision a country where no matter where you live, or who you are,



© ADOBE STOCK

you can enjoy living in a place that is healthy, prosperous and resilient.”

The Smart Growth Network offers the following 10 characteristics that smart growth development projects share:

1. Mix land uses.
2. Take advantage of compact building design.
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
4. Create walkable neighborhoods.

5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.

6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.

7. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.

8. Provide a variety of transportation choices.

9. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective.

10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

GET INVOLVED

If you'd like to advocate for smart growth in your area, focus your efforts at the local or state level, since that's where most planning and development decisions are made. This might include advocating for local farmers markets or bicycle paths, open space preserva-

tion, mass transit and flexibility in zoning regulations to accommodate smart growth.

Visit SmartGrowthAmerica.org to join the organization's email list and be alerted when there's legislation you can support or damaging proposals you can oppose.

To find EPA-funded smart growth initiatives in your area, visit www.epa.gov/smart-growth/smart-growth-your-community.



Help Keep Oceans Safe

Whether you live near an ocean or take vacations to them, your actions can directly effect how healthy the water and marine life is.

© ADOBE STOCK

Coral reefs help keep the ocean healthy and contribute to biodiversity. While climate change, overfishing and pollution have long taken a toll on coral reefs, the addition of sunscreen pollution has proven to be a major threat to these delicate ocean creatures.

When coral reefs die, the entire ecosystem is affected, including animals that live and feed in the reef. Be aware of how your actions at the beach can impact the environment and make smart choices.

SUNSCREENS AND CORAL REEFS

Some ingredients in sunscreen can be harmful to or even kill coral. In 2018,

Hawaii began banning sunscreens with oxybenzone and octinoxate, two reef-harming chemicals that were present in 3,500 of the most popular sunscreen products, according to the BBC.

The Environmental Protection Agency suggests learning about safer sunscreen choices or, better yet, cutting down on sunscreen use by wearing a long-sleeved shirt or rash guard to prevent sunburn.

The Oceanic Society recommends going a step further, avoiding even lipsticks, moisturizers and other cosmetics containing chemicals that are harmful to reefs.

The Coral Reef Alliance cautions that

even if a product is labeled as “reef-safe” or “reef-friendly,” checking the list of a product’s active ingredients is the only way to be sure it’s safe. This is because there is no government regulation or mandatory testing for reef impact.

Hawaii.com offers the following recommendations for choosing a safe sunscreen:

- Avoid sunscreens containing petrolatum, commonly known as mineral oil, which takes years to biodegrade, and is known to be harmful or fatal to aquatic life and waterfowl.
- Avoid sunscreens with high content of titanium dioxide. This mineral does

not biodegrade and is found to react in warm seawater to form hydrogen peroxide, which is harmful to all sea life.

- Avoid sunscreens with oxybenzone and octinoxate, which are linked to coral bleaching.

ACTIVITIES AROUND REEFS

The Environmental Protection Agency urges safe and responsible diving and snorkeling around coral reefs to protect them. Do not touch reefs, as it can damage the delicate coral animals, or anchor your boat on a reef, which can kill it. Instead, look for sandy bottoms or use moorings, if available.

Resources for Small Businesses



EPA Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

EPA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization advocates and advances

EPA Help for Small Businesses

Complying with the myriad environmental regulations at the federal, state and local level can be a huge undertaking for small businesses.

The Environmental Protection Agency offers resources to help reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses so you can focus on your bottom line.

The EPA allows small businesses, governments and organizations to provide early input into the development of certain regulations. The Small

Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 requires the EPA to provide small businesses with guides to environmental law written in plain language, as well as assistance for small businesses facing enforcement action. Small entities are allowed to give input on new regulations through the convening of a Small Business Advocacy Review Panel when new regulations are proposed.

The EPA's National Compliance Assistance Centers allow small businesses and other entities to access websites, assistance phone lines and e-mail discussion groups to help navigate regulations in their industry, as well as get help navigating state-level rules. Find a list of Centers at www.complianceassistance.net.

[complianceassistance.net](http://www.complianceassistance.net).

Another resource is the National Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (nationalsbeap.org.) This program is committed to “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin or income with the respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.”

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization helps with the business, regulatory and environmental compliance concerns of small and socio-economically disadvantaged businesses. This includes help with submitting proposals to

become an EPA vendor and collecting payments from the Agency, assistance with getting involved with government research, and technical assistance with asbestos and clean air compliance.

If you're looking to pare down your business's environmental impact, the EPA offers assistance specifically for small businesses. Its Energy Star Workbook for Small Business helps you increase energy efficiency by implementing realistic and cost-effective energy improvement projects. This can include forming a dedicated energy team, instituting an energy policy, assessing your current performance, setting goals, writing and implementing an action plan and monitoring your progress.

Eat An Earth-Friendly Diet

The intersection of food and climate change is a hot topic in environmental circles, garnering attention from researchers and retailers alike.

In 2018, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a climate report that decried more rapid environment change than previously expected. The report included a recommendation for less meat consumption worldwide to combat the changes. Since then, we've seen more meatless and sustainably produced meat products on store shelves.

Eating more sustainably, while more accessible than ever, can still be a big undertaking. Here's a look at what to consider if you're looking to green up your diet.

GOING MEAT FREE

It's no secret that a meat-free diet is safest for the environment. Inverse.com published a report in Nature Food after looking at 55,000 people's dietary data and linking it to factors such as greenhouse gas emissions and land and water use. It "found that vegans have just 30% of the dietary environmental impact of high-meat eaters."

In response to consumer demand, restaurants and retailers are quickly adding meat-free options to their



© ADOBE STOCK

offerings. Meat alternative products such as the Impossible Burger experienced runaway popularity in recent years, even ending up on the menus of fast-food chains.

While meat-free products are more accessible than ever and more people are adopting meat-free diets every day around the world, there are ways to eat more sustainably aside from completely kicking

meat to the curb.

According to FoodPrint.org, you can decrease your meat consumption by nearly 15%, "effectively decreasing the problems associated with meat production by the same amount," simply by giving up meat just one day a week.

OTHER OPTIONS

If you're not willing to give up meat even one day a week,

consider sustainably produced meat, which typically means buying pasture-raised products. Although they can be more expensive, FoodPrint recommends reducing consumption a bit to help offset the costs.

Another way to curb your dependence on meat is to keep your protein consumption within recommended amounts. Most adults only

need about 60-70 grams of protein per day (0.36 grams per pound of body weight). Most Americans get about 100, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vox.com reports that excessive protein consumption, especially from cholesterol-rich animal-based foods, is correlated with an increased risk of cancer and heart disease.

Recycling Trends

A lot has changed since rapidly filling landfills became a hot topic in the 1970s, causing curbside recycling in the U.S. to go mainstream.

Recycling rates continue to trend upward. In 1960, just over 6 percent of municipal solid waste was recycled, according to the History Channel. By 2017, that number had jumped to over 35%. Today the blue recycling bin is still ubiquitous, but as the materials used in products and packaging change, the rules of recycling are constantly changing, as well.

Here's a look at trends in how various waste products can be recycled and how local government agencies are adapting to meet demand.

THE MORE YOU KNOW

Local authorities are your best resource on what is recyclable in your area. This might be your city, county or township government — whichever is responsible for providing or contracting for waste removal services. You might have a local solid waste agency. Check with local authorities to find out which rules to follow.

Knowing the local rules is crucial to the effectiveness of recycling programs. RecycleNation.com cites the



© ADOBE STOCK

example of Hamilton, Ind., a town where residents improperly recycled a reported 1.65 million pounds of e-waste and hazardous materials, leading otherwise recyclable items to go into the landfill.

It is, thus, worth the effort to get to know the proper way to dispose of specific items. For example, alkaline batteries

can often be disposed of safely in your household trash, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, but to prevent fire hazards from lithium-ion batteries, recyclers might require the battery terminals to be taped, or the batteries placed in separate containers from household garbage or recycling bins.

Some recyclers accept plastics up to a certain designation — typically a number you can find printed inside a recycling arrow logo on a recyclable product. Know the upper limits of your local recycling program and ask local authorities how to dispose of any products you can't put in your curbside bin.

ZERO WASTE

In 2018, the EPA reported that a total of 292.4 million tons of municipal solid waste were generated, with only 94 million tons being recycled or composted. One way to reduce waste is to approach the problem not just after consumption but on the front end. The “zero waste” movement has the goal of reducing waste at all phases of production and consumption.

ZeroWaste.com defines the term as “the conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse and recovery of products, packaging and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health.” In practice, this means initiatives such as rethinking product packaging (streamlined, reusable, compostable), or reimagining the recycling process (one Japanese city requires its residents to sort recyclables into 45 different categories). On a personal level, ways to work toward zero waste might include avoiding single-use items (use stainless steel straws), using recyclable containers instead of plastic ones, composting, buying at farmers markets where there is no packaging and going paperless for your bills.

While “zero waste” is still an aspirational goal, the History Channel cautions that its challenges are many, and that it “requires a complete culture shift.”