

# Old Car Or Truck? Tricks To Boost Its Performance

(NAPSA)—Whether it's because of the economy or simply because today's vehicles are more durable, an increasing number of people are driving used cars and trucks longer. A recent study by R.L. Polk found that the average age of both cars and light trucks is at an all-time record high at 9.4 and 7.5 years, respectively.

Those looking to re-energize these rides with a bit more power may want to consider installing a performance-enhancing aftermarket product. Thousands of such products are available to bring new life to a tired car or truck, and many are designed to elevate the car's performance beyond what it was capable of in the first place. Here are just a few ideas:

## **Bolt-On Power**

A carefully designed intake system combined with a high-flow air filter can add significant horsepower to any car or truck. Combined with a performance exhaust system, gains can be as high as 25 horsepower or more on some engines. Because these changes offer a good return for a relatively small investment, they are among the most common bolt-on upgrades on an older car or truck.

## **Lighten Up**

Another easy way to improve performance is to replace heavy original parts with lighter ones. Replacement hoods and body parts made from carbon fiber and other lightweight materials are available for almost any vehicle, as are wheels that weigh less than the ones from the factory.

## **Handling Products**

Improving handling is an often-overlooked form of performance. It's rare to find a car that came with high-performance shocks or struts, and after a few years, the original suspension can wear significantly. With new, specially tuned shocks, bushings and springs, a car can handle better than it did when it was



**Most performance-enhancing aftermarket products can be found under the hood of a vehicle, but they can also come in the form of replacement hoods, body parts and even wheels.**

new. Another easy way to improve handling is by adding better brakes. These are widely available in bolt-on form, which allow for upgrading older cars to disc brakes or adding specially designed brake pads, stronger calipers and longer, better vented discs.

## **Turbochargers And Superchargers**

For those who are serious about improving power, turbochargers that force more air into the combustion chamber can add 50 to 100 more horsepower. It's possible to replace the original turbo with a bigger or more efficient one, or add a turbo where no turbo was offered. Superchargers, another high-performance option, are commonly offered by manufacturers in their specialty high-performance cars and trucks. Most people don't know that the same parts are available for sale to individuals, often offered by the same companies that supply them to the automakers.

## **For Trucks And 4x4s**

Replacing an easily clogged air filter with a reusable one can save a lot on a truck that sees extreme

duty. A wide variety of electric fans and auxiliary coolers allows trucks to pull more and work harder without overheating. For trucks and 4x4s, stronger axles, lower gears and better suspensions are available for models dating all the way back to World War II.

Generally, performance parts come in kit form, with instructions and an 800 number to call for advice, so there are a lot of products that can be installed by the average backyard mechanic.

That said, most performance upgrades are best handled by a professional installer who has all the right tools, including a lift and service bay, and experience with the type of job at hand is recommended. Visit [www.enjoythedrive.com](http://www.enjoythedrive.com) for information on the latest aftermarket performance parts and installers.

To locate performance parts for almost any kind of vehicle, go to [www.enjoythedrive.com](http://www.enjoythedrive.com) and [www.sema.org](http://www.sema.org) or call the Specialty Equipment Market Association at (909) 396-0289. The Web sites contain the latest parts and links to professional local installers.