

# How to Store a Car for Winter

Whether you are heading down south for an extended winter vacation, headed off to a semester at college, or just can't imagine using your convertible when there is a windchill, there are dozens of great reasons to store your car for the...

Method 1 of 3:

## Preparing the Exterior of Your Car



**Wash and wax your car.** Giving your car a thorough external detail before storing it will help protect your paint from salt and moisture. Be sure the car is completely dry before storing it or you could trap moisture under the storage material, potentially causing damage to your car's exterior.<sup>[1]</sup>

1. Hand washing, rather than a commercial wash, is recommended. You also want to polish any chrome on the outside of your vehicle.<sup>[2]</sup>
2. Don't neglect the undercarriage. Stop by your local automotive shop for some rubberized undercoating or WD-40; spraying either of these on the underside of your car will provide lasting protection.<sup>[3]</sup>
3. Be sure you wash your car before waxing it. How you wax your car will depend on whether you are applying the wax by hand or by electronic buffer.



**Fill tires with extra air.** Before storing your vehicle, check the pressure on the tires. Filling the tires with a little extra air will help prevent the tires from going flat.

1. You can also store your vehicle on jackstands to avoid putting any pressure on the tires. However, many vehicle frames do not respond well to this type of storage, so it's best to check with a local mechanic before taking advantage of this option.
2. You can also put 2x10 inch blocks of wood beneath each tire to help ease the pressure of parking on concrete.<sup>[4]</sup>



**Select a waterproof cover.** Selecting a quality cover for your car is important because dust and grime can build up and eventually damage your car's exterior. A normal sheet or dust cover will do little to maintain your vehicle. When deciding what cover to use choose be sure it's waterproof and made of a breathable material.

1. Be sure to never use a tarp to store your vehicle. It will scratch your paint and trap moisture against your car.<sup>[5]</sup>
2. If you are able to store your car in a garage, the cover is not as necessary.

Method 2 of 3:

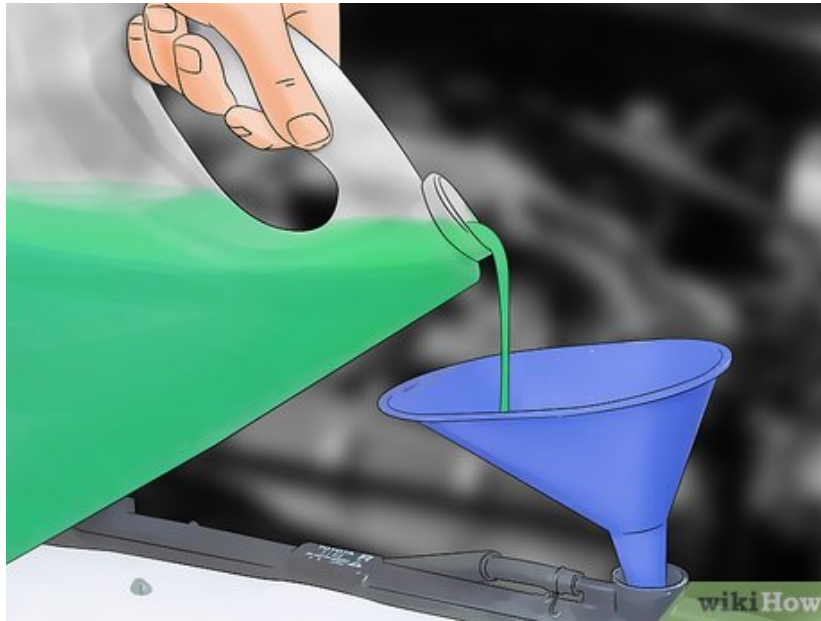
## Caring for the Engine and Other Internal Mechanisms



**Fill the tank.** Leaving your gas tank empty will lead to unwanted moisture buildup which can easily cause your tank to rust or clog. The more gas you have in your tank, the less air space, and the less you have to worry about.<sup>[6]</sup>

1. You may also want to purchase a fuel stabilizer if you are storing your car for longer than three months.<sup>[7]</sup>

2.

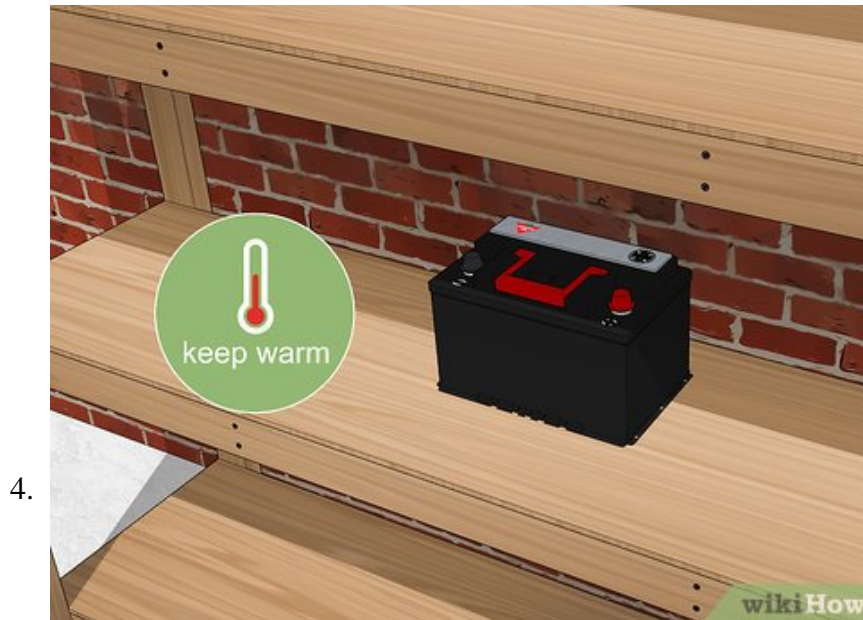


**Check fluids like oil and antifreeze.** It's best to change your oil and oil filter before storing, giving your car a fresh reservoir to work with. It's also essential to top off the antifreeze because it will help your vehicle maintain the same level of efficiency and power when you restart it.<sup>[8]</sup>

3.



**Put boxes of baking soda under the hood.** Moisture is your car's worst nightmare during storage season. Soak up any extra moisture by putting 2-4 boxes of baking soda in various places beneath the hood.<sup>[9]</sup>



**Store your battery separately.** Store the battery in a warm room as cold batteries tend to crack. In order to disconnect your battery, first identify the negative terminal which will be marked by black plastic and a minus sign. Use pliers or a wrench to secure and then remove the negative. Repeat this process for the positive terminal. Once you've removed the nuts, remove the bracket holding your battery in place using your wrench or pliers. Now all you have left to do is lift the battery out and move it to a warm, dry location.

1. Before removing the battery, be sure your car is off, and your gloves and goggles are on. You should also be wary that the positive and negative cables do not touch. Also, do not let the positive nut touch any metal as it could be potentially dangerous.<sup>[10]</sup>
2. If you choose to keep the battery in the car, you will need to have someone start it every few weeks so that the battery does not lose its charge.<sup>[11]</sup>

Method 3 of 3:

## Maintaining the Interior of Your Car

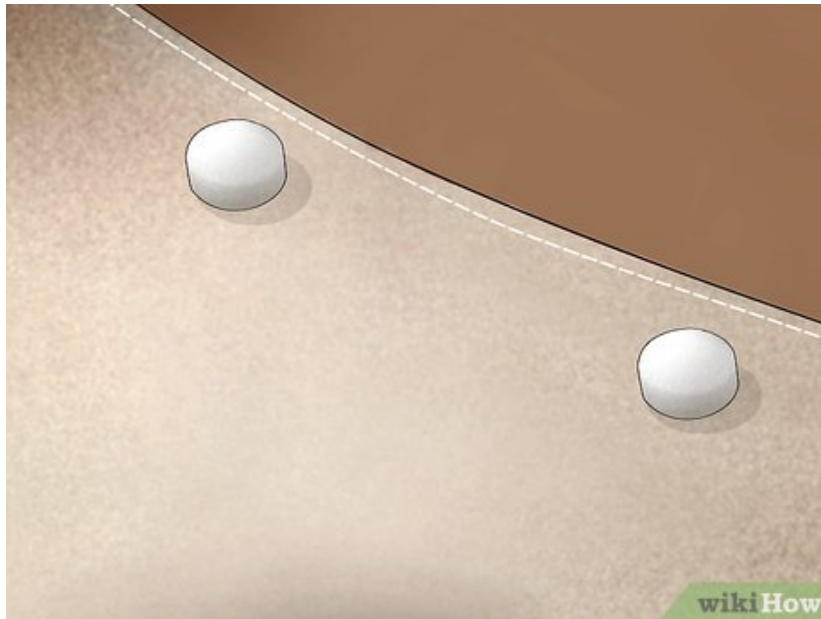
1.



**Use seat covers and desiccant to avoid moisture buildup.** The cabin of your car is as prone to moisture damage as the rest of your vehicle. Slipping seat covers on the seats and tossing a few cheap packets of desiccant on the floorboard can help defend against potential damage.

1. It's also important to steam clean the interior far in advance of storage, since the steam will leave a fair amount of moisture behind.<sup>[12]</sup>

2.



**Store dryer sheets and mothballs in the cabin.** Mice and other small rodents love to make homes out of inactive vehicles. Throw a couple dryer sheets and mothballs soaked in peppermint in or on your car to help deter these unwanted roommates.

1. You can also set traps, but only outside of the car: a dead mouse decomposing in your car is not going to lead to an easy spring transition.<sup>[13]</sup>
2. You can also put steel wool in the pipes to prevent critters from climbing in.<sup>[14]</sup>



**Don't set the parking break.** For many people pulling the parking break is a habit, but with an extended period of time there is a possibility that your brake pads could meld to your rotors. You can purchase a tire stopper if you are worried about the car's movement.<sup>[15]</sup>



**Detail the car's interior.** Vacuum your car and remove all trash. Wrappers and food particles that are left behind will attract animals and lead to mold if left unattended.<sup>[16]</sup>

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