



Improving Mileage: "Hypermiling"

Posted by [Heading Out](#) on June 5, 2008 - 10:30am

Topic: [Demand/Consumption](#)

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"So, how many miles does it get?" It was a Sunday morning, and we were looking at my car, and so I mentioned that I had started to change the way I drove. As a result (driven by a little monitor display) I was now getting about 10 – 20% better mileage than the estimate I was given when I bought the car. "Yup," said the pickup driver I was talking with, "I've started doing the same sort of thing. Slow down a bit, don't accelerate as hard, the little things. And you know what?" He went on, " a lot of other folk have started driving that way too. Of course you've still got the hot rods, but in general" Of course it helps that we live in a relatively small town, in more of a rural setting.

And just as some three years ago, we had to start learning the new phrase "demand destruction", it may now be time to learn about the new term "Hypermiling." Because, in terms of improving mileage performance neither they nor I in the league of those that can get more than 70 mpg out of a Prius, a feat highlighted on the CBS Morning Show the other week. The story of how the shoot took place, in itself an introduction to hypermiling, and the adventure of the drive itself is detailed at [CleanMPG forums](#), with the highlights including

Across Indiana, the Prius was holding its own in the 70.3–70.7mpg range while I was traveling in the standard 48–53mph range using SHM of IG14 and TPS of 18 whenever I could. As soon as I crossed the Ohio border (time: 10:47 CST), an off the rear quarter wind began to increase and so did my speeds. 30 miles past the border, the Prius picked up to 71.7mpg. Another 60 miles and she was up to 73.1mpg. I had two quick bathroom breaks inside Ohio but only lost maybe 9 minutes total while the Prius stayed booted up through the stops.

Inside Ohio and 389 miles out, Benno had to refuel while I was only two pips down. Benno in the Standard had traveled 389 miles on 9.37 gallons for a calculated 41.5mpg and 45.3mpg per the FCD. He was playing with the screen and reset his FCD about 100 miles prior but I calc'ed the actual from start to reset and reset to fill. I also passed him while he was refueling but it was not long before he flew by for the second time!

As I say this level of change is not yet widespread, but perhaps one of the impacts of the higher price has been a more conservative driving style from those who have not, in the past, given it much thought.

Yet, as Leanan caught in a [Drumbeat piece last Sunday](#) there is no appetite, as yet, to make practices, such as lower speed limits, mandatory yet.

For all the griping about spiking gas prices, there's no clamor for the return of the little-lamented 55 mph speed limit of the '70s and '80s — though most agree it reduces consumption and saves money.

"It's not that people haven't thought of it — just no one is even close to discussing implementing it," said Therese Langer, speaking for the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy. "It's not high on anyone's list."

Cars, in general, get better mileage than they did back in the 1970's when the limits were in place, particularly when the limits are below 60 mph.

However it is not a lost cause. Historically speeds on the German autobahn have not been restricted, but this April [Bremen were the first](#) to introduce a limit - albeit at 120 kph (75 mph), though there is a difference between the parties on what should be done.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, leader of the pro-business conservative Christian Democrats (CDU), has ruled out introducing a national speed limit as proposed by her SPD coalition partners.

The SPD voted at a party conference last year to introduce a speed limit of 130 kph (80 mph) on motorways to help reduce CO2 emissions.

Interestingly [Wikipedia](#) notes that only three places have no general speed limit, Nepal, the Isle of Man, and the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.

We are heading out for family related vacation and associated social events for the next three weeks, and may post from the road, if facilities will allow, but it will also give me a change to see how my mileage changes as we do drive more extensively — with most of the driving likely to occur along the East Coast.

Most of the suggestions for improving mileage performance are [relatively straightforward](#), and though there are a [more advanced techniques](#) out there, I am not (at least yet) that much of a fanatic that I am likely to be following them all. On the other hand I am going to print the list out, and see how some of them at least work out as we make our trip. And who knows, as the numbers start to creep up on that little monitor every time I shut the engine off, I may become more under its control. We'll just have to see.



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