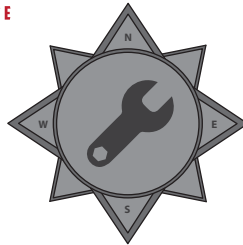


# CHECK ENGINE OIL LEVELS

What is oil really? Aside from dirty and smelly. The reality is, it is essential to the running of our engines; it is like the blood that keeps us running. Without it, metal parts grind against each other, create massive heat, and bind together destroying the engine. With it, parts glide over each other on a magic carpet of oil and, in most cases, metals don't touch each other. Oil also flushes away dirt and fragments, keeping the engine clean.

## FLIP OVER FOR YOUR NEXT CHALLENGE

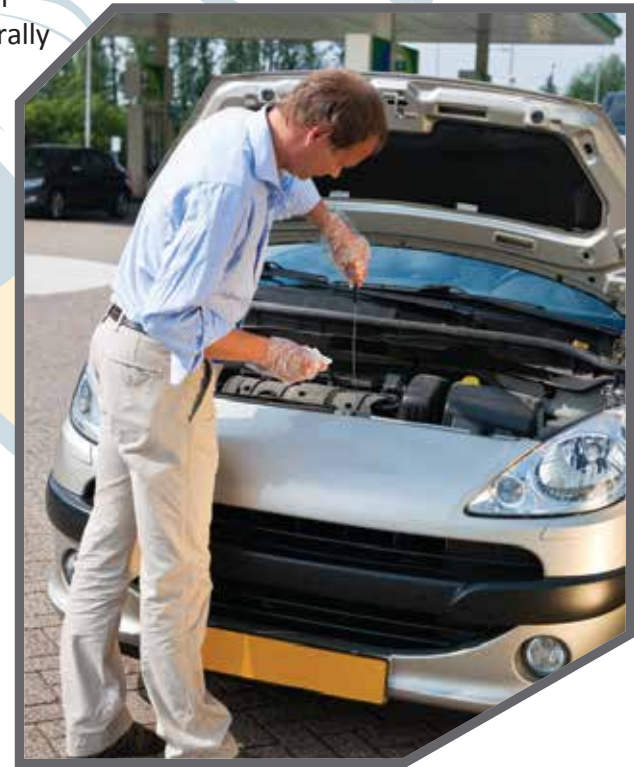


### EARN THIS NUGGET

With the owner's permission, and probably supervision, check the oil in all the gas engines in your household. Report back to the owners of those items about their oil levels. Also let them know how dirty the oil looks. Is it still clear and golden, or black?

So, whether we are talking car, motorcycle, lawn mower, pressure washer, generator, or anything else with a gas engine, oil is the life blood. There is a correct level of oil. Too little and there won't be enough to get to all the places it needs to be. Too much will create too much pressure and can blow the seals that hold the oil in the engine.

Any gas engine will have a dip stick. There is, however, no hard and fast rule for checking oil. So you'll have to read the instructions specific to that engine. For a car, you should generally check a cold engine, or one that has been turned off for ten minutes or longer. The dip stick is generally a long strip of metal. Armed with a rag, pull the dip stick out, clean it with your rag, put it back in. Pull it out one more time, and look at the level. It should be in between the max and min level. If it is low, the correct grade of oil needs to be added. (Not in the dip stick hole. There is a cap labeled OIL where the oil is added.) Adding oil can be tricky in itself. Most importantly, never add too much. It is easier to add more than remove too much.



Smaller engines will generally have a dip stick integrated into the oil cap. Often the process is similar. But to check the oil level, you often don't screw the cap back into the housing; just stick it back in the hole as with a car engine. Find the manual to see how those engines work.