

What services you need and when

From PriusChat.com

galaxee

the two, the only



My Car: 2005 Prius
Package: #5

Another public service announcement from your friendly tech and translator...

A list of commonly recommended services, whether they're needed and if so, when, and other useful info.

1. brake flush

may be a good idea after 100k miles/10 years. completely cleaning out the whole system is near impossible with standard brake flush equipment (mainly because the prius has almost 1 gal of brake fluid in it!) possible complications include air in brake system, damage to actuator or solenoid valves. (PS to those of you worried about rusting... the calipers are aluminum body construction with a composite plastic piston.)

2. clean/adjust rear brakes

only if you have drums (obviously in the prius, we do). ideally, for optimal brake life and performance, this is probably a good idea every 30k miles. for other cars, 15k a better idea. when you hear a tone out of the rear brakes, it's either time to change the brakes or have them cleaned/adjusted. if it's not done, you can see an increased brake wear rate (front and rear). possible complications are problems due to technician error- adjustment extremely tight can overheat a bearing. otherwise noise, brake chatter, or increased wear rate and glazing if not properly adjusted.

3. transaxle fluid

there is no way to "flush" the trans on a prius. if someone tries to sell you this, run. they can drain and fill, however. the fluid is expensive and is supposed to go 100k, but you can never go wrong changing it early. in most cases it isn't necessary. this is the same fluid that goes into a tundra for 100k under towing conditions. the only complication you might see is again due to tech error- using the wrong fluid or not filling all the way.

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4. engine and inverter fluid

drain/fill is OK, but NO flushes. it's not even possible on the inverter and the engine is difficult but not impossible, however NOT recommended as it can cause serious damage to the electric water pump and switching valves. you do not need the drain/fill until your car hits 100k. if the coolant is still nice and pink, don't do it then either. again, the coolant is said to go 100k. while you're not going to do any wrong by changing it early, again it is expensive like the trans fluid. possible complications include more tech error- bleeding these systems is a PITA and getting all the air out is hard. an incomplete fill, use of the wrong coolant, can damage your car.

5. EFI or fuel injector cleaning

really not necessary until you see 100k, if you have a bad tank of gas, or if you start seeing misfires (and you'll see a check engine light when that happens.) possible problems include damage to fuel lines or connectors while disconnecting/reconnecting the adapter equipment to the system. the fuel line that you would access to hook up the adapter is directly above the exhaust manifold... NOT a place you want a leak. other possible problems could include seal failures due to pressure (rare but possible.) since it doesn't idle, most techs will get in and stomp on the gas pedal until the EFI cleaner runs its course. this leads to a condition called "blinky check engine light" which means that you have overheated your catalyst and are in serious danger of melting the insides of your catalytic converter.

6. three-part service, fuel induction service, throttle plate cleaning

these are all different names for essentially the same service. (the "three part" also includes a top engine cleaner aka fuel induction service and fuel additive.) this is really only needed if the throttle plate starts to stick. a good idea after 100k, but just the throttle plate cleaning. there is no accessible port to feed the top engine cleaner through, and fuel system additives are not recommended with the bladder fuel tank. possible complications from doing various parts of the service: fuel tank additive can possibly damage the fuel system- unlikely but still possible. biggest issue with this is deposits on the spark plugs, causing reduced power and fuel economy. for the throttle plate cleaning, using too much of the cleaner can cause the car to run funny for a few minutes but that's about it.

7. PCV valve replacement

a good idea at a 60k interval just to be on the safe side. if this fails, it will either stick closed (rare) and blow oil seals, or stick open and allow oil to enter the intake. most people forget this valve because it's hidden. but it's a simple replacement and damn hard to screw up.

8. alignment

depends on your driving style. aggressive drivers should have it checked every 10k. otherwise every 15-20k just to make sure it's right. a MUST when replacing tires and if you notice uneven tire wear.

*if you have a question about something that's not listed here, please do ask.