

# A winter refresher on car care



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My baby sister, Jordan, had her first baby this fall, Calum Michael. I had the privilege of spending five glorious days with them a few weeks ago. In doing so, a flood of memories came back to me ... little clothes, pacifiers, diapers. The first day I spent in their home, I witnessed everyone trying to adapt to sweet Calum's schedule and his demands.

As an experienced mother of four, I remembered how beneficial it was to have my children adapt to the schedule I set forth instead of going by theirs. I lovingly shared my thoughts and concerns and together we began a new schedule. By the time I left, Calum was more alert during his awake periods and was sleeping better during the nights. It was wonderful to wrap a new baby in my arms, spend time with loved ones and share my knowledge with them.

The older I get, the more I forget. So it was amazing to me how quickly all things baby seemed to come flooding back to me. Likely, it was because I have had first-hand knowledge of these things ... times four! Experience of certain things does leave a mark on our minds and how we remember them, don't you think? In light of the forgetful moments, and since I've been writing auto articles for nearly four years, I figured it might be time for a refresher course to highlight past information I've shared.

**1. Choose your "auto-home" wisely.** Check out their website and reviews. Do they have a good reputation? Do they use quality parts? Do they offer a warranty? Are

they friendly and helpful? Are their location and service hours convenient? Is there a shuttle service or comfortable waiting area? Do they offer financing? Finding an auto-home and staying put will allow you to build a relationship with people who are taking care of your second most expensive investment. They have your vehicle records at their fingertips to best care for your vehicle and address new concerns as well as old.

**2. Communication is always key in any relationship and especially between you and your auto-home.** Make sure you are paying attention to what your vehicle is telling you. When you have your car serviced, are there any other issues you have noticed that you would like to have addressed? Engage your senses—what do you see, feel, hear? Relay all of this information to the service advisor assisting you so they can ensure the mechanic is privy to everything happening with your vehicle.

Most auto shops want nothing more than to fix your vehicle and make sure you are well cared for. Help them do this with good communication at the beginning, middle and end. If you are pleased with the service you receive, let the world know by word of mouth and public reviews. If you are dissatisfied with the service, give them an opportunity to take care of you with good communication and grace. Remember that these are human beings fixing machines—things go



(Above) Calum Michael. (Right) Jeana with Calum.

wrong sometimes. And just like you make mistakes, others occasionally do as well. Be aware and be patient, as your mechanics are doing their best.

**3. Maintenance is essential to ensure your vehicle is rolling healthy.** I've written countless articles on this subject, including the importance of flushing fluids and changing filters to keep your vehicle's systems clean, alignments to keep you rolling straight and save the life of your tires. You'll likely find a maintenance schedule

with your owner's manual or your auto-home can assist you with that. When is the last time yours was in for service?

**4. Timely repairs don't just keep you safe, they keep other motorists safe as well.** When you know there is a problem with your vehicle, it is paramount that you have it addressed as soon as possible. Delaying repairs such as brakes, suspension components, tires, burnt out bulbs or faulty wipers can put your life and the lives of others at risk—especially as we move into the slippery roads of winter.

**5. Be a good role model in obeying traffic laws and caring for your vehicle.** If you have other people in your life, especially children of any age, you are leaving an impression on them in being a responsible motorist. Talk to them about the importance in following laws set forth for safety and teach them how to care for a vehicle so they will have the proper knowledge.

**6. Don't forget about your warranty!** Often we purchase extended warranties to give us peace of mind for a longer period of time. Read it, know when it ends—put a reminder on your calendar, consider having a vehicle inspection before it expires so issues can be addressed. And remember that extended warranties are valid at most repair shops—not just the dealerships.

Caring for your vehicle and being a responsible motorist can be likened to caring for your infant and being a responsible parent. A parent must choose a reliable and trustworthy physician, they must communicate issues well, adhere to a schedule, address problems when they arise and be a good role model. Tip 6 does not apply as babies don't come with warranties—you get what you get. And like a vehicle, some are more difficult than others, some have unique problems and some make you a bit crazy—especially as they hit their teen years. But the better you care for them, the more blessed you will be.

Article courtesy of Babcock Auto Care.

