



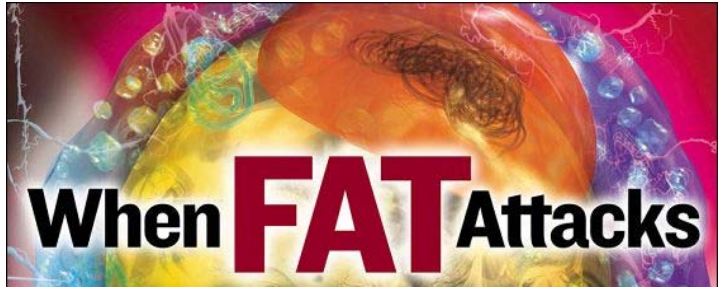
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Home » WOT » Want to Conserve Fuel? Study Finds Losing Weight Saves Money at the Pump

WIDE OPEN THROTTLE WOT Digg Want to Conserve Fuel? Study Finds Losing Weight Saves Money at the Pump



It turns out inefficient engines and heavy materials aren't the only things weighing down fuel economy. According to a study by a professor and doctoral student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, nearly forty years of increasingly fat Americans have become a burden on fuel economy.

The study's creators -- professor Sheldon H. Jacobson and doctoral student Douglas King -- claim that since 1960, vehicles in the U.S. have consumed 200 million more gallons of gas per year because of overweight drivers and passengers.

"It turns out that Americans are approximately an inch taller now than they were in the 1960s. To address this, our new study looked at the distribution of body mass index, instead of the distribution of weight."

The newer study bases its conclusions on government information about the age and gender of passengers, changes in weight of Americans, and the performance of cars and light trucks.

This study could provide more incentive for those with New Year's resolutions to lose weight: Not only is it beneficial for one's health to lose weight, exercising and eating well will -- in a very minor way -- help reduce our dependence on foreign oil as well.

Additionally, as Charles Courtemanche writes in a study conducted in 2007, discouraged automobile use and fewer trips to the local diner could have a twofold effect: passengers might become slimmer and, as a result, vehicles won't have to carry around so much weight.

Source: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Photo courtesy of Newsweek

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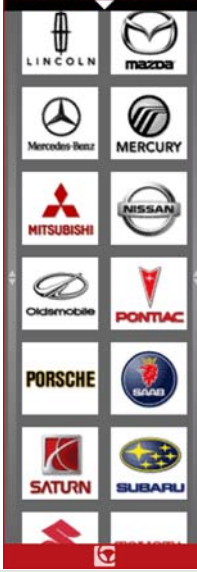
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