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New Year, New You, New . . . Filters?

Ahhh ... we can all breathe easy again, now that the holiday chaos has settled, those nice holiday breaks have revived us, and the promise of a new year inspires our desire for better habits.



But wait—Can you really breathe easy? When was the last time you changed your filters? The filter in your car? And that filter in your house somewhere?

Some of the most popular New Year's Resolutions include improving personal health and saving money. **If you take the time to replace filters—you can accomplish both!**

It is generally recommended that you replace the HVAC filters in your home every three months to maintain an efficient



home system, prolong the life of your AC unit, and reduce exposure to dust, allergens, spores, and bacteria. Don't forget

about your stand alone air purifiers. Filter change recommendations vary between 3 -18 months depending on your device.

If you decide to replace your home filters make sure to look for [HEPA certified](#)

[filters](#) that remove the particularly dangerous very fine particulate matter pollution (PM_{2.5}) from the air [1].

Now for those filters in your car.

Firstly, your engine has its own filter, but your car also has a cabin filter to keep the air you breath clean. The

[engine filter](#) keeps your engine running more efficiently extending the life of your car's engine overall,

preventing costly repairs. If you're not a do-it-yourselfer, then most good technicians



at oil stops or dealerships will check the filters and know when to recommend new ones.

The car cabin filter, usually located behind the glovebox, is an easy, inexpensive part to replace. Preparing for the drier, dustier part



of the year ahead will keep your car running more smoothly. New filters will protect your health by reducing your expo-

sure to pollutants, *and* save you money.

Okay, now you can [breathe easy](#).

For more information about filter replacements and a how-to guide, please visit:

[WikiHow: Change Your Car Air Filter](#)
[WikiHow: Change Your Home Air Filter](#)



“It is estimated that 5.8 million Americans aged 65 and older have Alzheimer’s today, or about one new case every 65 seconds. The number will triple to around 14 million by 2050.”

—Fisher Center for Alzheimer’s Research Foundation

Air Pollution Damages More Than Just Your Lungs

The alarming rate of increase in the diagnosis of [Alzheimer’s Disease](#) in the United States is a major concern for public health officials, scientists, medical professionals, and the American public.

With the rise in this devastating disease has come more research on the causes of Alzheimer’s. Recent research studies combining air pollution data and human brain health are revealing a suspect connection between the development of dementia symptoms, the occurrence of Alzheimer’s, and the levels of exposure to fine particulate air pollution in the long term [6].



The exact causes of Alzheimer’s are still not completely clear to researchers but multiple studies across the world are beginning to reveal a strong correlation between declining cognitive function and exposure to air pollution over time.

A recent study at the Keck School of Medicine, Univ. of Southern California, analyzed data of 998 women, aged 73–87 who underwent long-term cognitive evaluations as well as studying where

they lived and the pollution levels in that geographic area. At the end of the study, even after accounting for income, education, geographic location and smoking status, researcher’s found an even connection between exposure to particulate pollution and level of cognitive impairments [8].



Other long-term studies in Seattle, Washington; the United Kingdom; and Canada have monitored exposure to air pollution from roads and traffic, and the incidence of symptoms of dementia, and Alzheimer’s diagnoses [12]. These studies are revealing a possible high risk of neurodegenerative decline in people who live closer to sources of fine particulate matter pollution because of the ability of very fine particles to enter the blood stream and eventually tissues of the brain [13].

Further research is needed for strong evidence but an awareness of the personal effects of air pollution can help us all better prioritize protecting ourselves, our families, and our communities.

 For more information on these diseases please visit the Alzheimer’s Association at www.Alz.org

3 Uncommon Ways to Reduce Pollution

⇒ Reduce & Reuse *before* You Recycle

Reducing your consumption of disposable goods and seeking out reusable, long-lived products helps reduce waste and resulting emissions from landfills, raw resource extraction, and product transportation. Reusable water bottles, grocery bags, cloth towels/napkins, and Tupperware for dining-out leftovers are all easy steps to reduce your impact.

⇒ Plant Shade Trees

Planting trees in your yard can provide much needed shade over your home and reduce energy costs in the long term while even increasing property values. [Native trees](#) like Palo Verde, Mesquite, Desert Willow, and Lysiloma (Desert Fern) do well in our climate and need less water.



⇒ Use Smart Technology for Your Thermostat

Purchasing a [smart thermostat](#) for your home allows you to remotely control the temperature of your home and increase your homes energy efficiency [10]. Many smart thermostats “learn” your preferences, detect a possible problem with your HVAC system, and reduce AC/heater use overall by adjusting temperatures while you’re asleep or away.

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A Service of Pinal County Air Quality Department Travel Reduction Program

31 N Pinal Street, Bldg. F
Florence, AZ 85132
(520) 866-6929

Questions or Comments? Please contact:
[Rebecca Schexnayder](#) (520) 866-6806
Transportation Program Coordinator