

DIY Car Battery maintenance and replacement guide



A healthy car battery is essential for a reliable start. This guide will equip you with the knowledge to perform basic DIY maintenance and replacement of your vehicle's battery. If you are uncomfortable performing any of the following tasks, contact AAA Mobile Battery Service at 1-800-AAA-HELP or visit AAA.com/battery for assistance.

Step 1

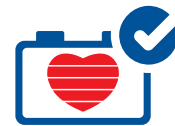


Safety First!

- Park the vehicle on a dry, flat surface and set the parking brake.
- Turn the ignition off. If the vehicle is warm, give it time to cool before replacing your battery.
- Batteries contain sulfuric acid, which can cause burns. Wear safety glasses and gloves when handling a car battery.
- Battery terminals produce sparks. Avoid creating sparks near flammable materials, no smoking.
- Always remove the negative terminal first, and reconnect it last, to minimize the risk of short circuits.

Step 2

Checking Your Battery Health:



- **Visual Inspection:** Look for signs of corrosion, cracks, or a bulging case. These indicate a potential battery failure.
- **Voltage Test:** Use a multimeter to measure the battery voltage. A healthy battery should read approximately 12.6 volts with the engine off. Readings below 12.4 volts may indicate a weak battery.
- Call AAA for your free battery test.

Step 3

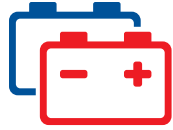
Cleaning Corrosion:



- Mix baking soda with water to create a paste. Apply the paste to the corrosion around the terminals, Using a wire brush for the terminals, and a gloved finger for the battery case, apply the paste to the corrosion around the terminals to remove it.
- Flush the area with clean water afterward, avoid getting water in the vents. Wipe away any leftover solution using a damp rag.
- **Tip:** Apply petroleum jelly to the clean terminals to prevent future corrosion.

Step 4

Replacing Your Battery:



- **Identify Your Battery:** Visit AAA.com/battery and answer a few simple questions about your vehicle. AAA can recommend the correct battery type and size for your vehicle.
- **Gather your tools:** You will need a wrench or socket set to loosen the terminal connections and a battery post cleaner.

Step 5

Replacement Process:



1. To ensure your vehicle retains its custom settings during a battery replacement, we recommend using a Keep Alive Memory (KAM) tool. This tool plugs into your vehicle's OBDII or diagnostic port, typically located under the steering wheel. The KAM tool provides sufficient power to preserve computer and radio settings while the battery is disconnected. Since there are various types of KAM tools available, it's important to research and choose the one best suited for your vehicle.
2. Remove the battery tie-down/restraint.
3. Disconnect the negative terminal first; look for the black cable and the minus (-) symbol. Next, disconnect the positive terminal. To prevent a short circuit, always cover the positive terminal with a rag or glove.
4. Carefully lift the old battery out.
5. Place the new battery in the compartment, ensuring proper polarity (attach the positive terminal to positive post and negative terminal to negative post).
6. Tighten the positive terminal connection first, then the negative.
7. After replacing your battery, ensure the tie-down/restraint is properly re-installed.

Important Reminders:

- Double check that the new battery is the correct type for your car.



By visiting AAA.com/Battery. Enter your vehicle information. AAA will recommend the correct battery for your vehicle. You'll receive a free quote, and can purchase online.

- Dispose of your old battery responsibly. Many auto parts stores and recycling centers accept old car batteries.
 - A battery core charge will be applied when purchasing a new battery. This charge will be refunded when your old battery core is returned to the Battery Drop of bin next to the Smart locker.

Additional DIY Tips (for the Experienced):



- Clean the battery tray: Remove any built-up dirt or debris that can contribute to corrosion.
- Check battery cables: Look for signs of wear or damage on the battery cables.

If you prefer not to handle it alone, AAA offers Free Battery Installation for Members if they select Mobile Battery Service at the time of battery purchase. Visit AAA.com/battery or call 1-800-AAA-HELP.

Disclaimer: The advice, how-to guides, and car care information available on AAA.com/battery & How To are intended as general resources for maintenance and automotive repairs. They should be used at your own risk, as they are presented from a general perspective only. The information provided is accurate and true to the best of AAA's knowledge. However, there may be omissions, errors, or mistakes. Be sure to consult your owner's manual, or a licensed, professional mechanic for vehicle-specific repair information. Refer to the service manual for specific diagnostic, repair, and tool information for your particular vehicle. Always chock your wheels prior to lifting a vehicle. Always disconnect the negative battery cable before servicing an electrical application on the vehicle to protect its electrical circuits in the event that a wire is accidentally pierced or grounded. Use caution when working with automotive batteries. Sulfuric acid (i.e., the electrolyte in car batteries) is caustic and can burn clothing and skin or cause blindness. Always wear gloves and safety glasses and other personal protection equipment, and work in a well-ventilated area. Should electrolyte get on your body or clothing, neutralize it immediately with a solution of baking soda and water. Do not wear ties or loose clothing when working on your vehicle.