How to Change Your Car's Oil (Step by Step)

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A fully illustrated 28-step guide to changing your car's oil safely: confirm the right grade and parts, raise the car on stands, drain the old oil and swap the filter, refill to the dipstick, and dispose of the used oil responsibly.

Phase 1 — Confirm the Spec and Set Up Safely

1. **Read the oil grade and capacity in the manual**
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2. **Buy the right amount of the specified oil**
   Buy the right amount of the specified oil.
3. **Get the correct filter and a new drain washer**
   Get the correct filter and a new drain washer.
4. **Check the warranty and service records**
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5. **Park on level ground and set the handbrake**
   Park on level ground and set the handbrake.
6. **Raise the car and secure it on jack stands**
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7. **Warm the engine for a couple of minutes**
   Warm the engine for a couple of minutes.

Phase 2 — Drain the Old Oil and Change the Filter

8. **Locate the drain plug and the filter**
   Locate the drain plug and the filter.
9. **Slide the drain pan underneath**
   Slide the drain pan underneath.
10. **Loosen the plug and let the oil run out**
    Loosen the plug and let the oil run out.
11. **Inspect the plug and its old washer**
    Inspect the plug and its old washer.
12. **Loosen the old filter by hand**
    Loosen the old filter by hand.
13. **Coat the new filter's rubber seal with oil**
    Coat the new filter's rubber seal with oil.
14. **Screw the new filter on by hand**
    Screw the new filter on by hand.

Phase 3 — Refill to Spec and Check for Leaks

15. **Refit the plug with the new washer**

    Refit the plug with the new washer.

16. **Pour in slightly less than the full capacity**

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17. **Wait, then read the dipstick**

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18. **Top up a little at a time**

    Top up a little at a time.

19. **Run the engine for about a minute**

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20. **Look underneath for fresh drips**

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21. **Recheck the level once it settles**

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Phase 4 — Close Up, Dispose and Record

22. **Wipe the plug, filter and surrounding housing**

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23. **Pour the used oil into a sealed container**

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24. **Take the oil and filter to a recycling point**

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25. **Lower the car carefully**

    Lower the car carefully.

26. **Reset the oil-life indicator**

    Reset the oil-life indicator.

27. **Log the date, mileage and product used**

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28. **Check the level again the next morning**

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Sources

1. AAA — driving and vehicle safety
   https://www.aaa.com/
2. USA.gov — official U.S. government services
   https://www.usa.gov/
3. Mozilla — web and browser resources
   https://www.mozilla.org/
4. Microsoft Learn
   https://learn.microsoft.com/

Written as a checklist from https://www.howcompass.com/how-to/How-to-Change-Car-Oil. Corrections: https://www.howcompass.com/correctio