

Enter Keywords Here



- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Video](#)
- [DTV](#)
- [Metromix](#)
- [Lotto](#)
- [Links](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Your Money](#)
- [For Moms](#)
- [Blogs](#)



Comment, blog & share photos  
[Log in](#) | [Become a member](#) | [Search people](#)



Tammie Souza calls your phone when severe weather threatens YOUR neighborhood. [SIGN UP HERE](#)

**metromix** Spring Break 2009: Click here to find Tampa Bay's best beaches, bars and bods

## Have you ever been ripped off at auto repair store?

Posted By: Isabel Mascarenas ■ 1 hr ago

ADVERTISEMENT

Clearwater, Florida - Mary Cutillo can open the hood of her car and identify many parts, but she admits that's about it. She hopes to learn what all these parts do during a free Car Care Clinic on Saturday.

"I hope to learn about all the things I don't know on my car which is a lot," says Mary.

The [Ice Cold Air Discount Auto Repair](#) shop in Clearwater at 1180 Court Street is offering the free clinic starting at noon. So far about 50 people have signed up mostly women but some men too. There are still spaces available.

Brett O'Neill owns two of the 17 stores in the Bay area, including the one on Court Street. "Anything I give to the community it gives back to me. I'm a small business owner customers are important to me want to take care of them make them feel comfortable."

O'Neill says his goal for his customers is to be educated, "If you know what your car takes you have a better understanding of what it should need instead of getting pushed into buying something and not actually need."

The more educated a customer is O'Neill says the less chance they have of being taken. Mary says it happened to her with another mechanic, "Every time I left the shop something wrong with my car have to take it back again. I realized what was happening they were doing something to my car."

Mary says after a few months of going back and forth to the mechanic and about 600 dollars later in repair bills she figured it out. "It made me feel angry made me feel stupid too."

Shop owner Brett O'Neill will teach the class for women. He tells women when walking into an auto shop fake it. "Act like you know all about cars say your dad was a mechanic," says O'Neill. He adds, "If a woman comes in and says I don't know anything about cars she's putting herself in a position at someone else's mercy."

To save on expensive repairs, O'Neill says don't ignore strange car noises and leaks, "Listen to your gut if your gut is telling you maybe something is wrong with my car check it out. No one knows your car like you do."

One car in his shop is leaking antifreeze, if it had not been caught early the repair could be costly, "The car can start to overheat get costly ruin the engine damage a bunch of expensive stuff," says O'Neill.

He says if the leak runs clear don't be alarmed, it's the air conditioner but if it's brown or red fluid you should worry and get it checked out.

Car noises also indicate a problem. He uses a loose motor mount as an example, "It can destroy other mounts and tear up the axle. It could turn into a \$600 to \$1,000 repair catching it early right now it's \$200 to fix it."

Check your fluids, the oil should be changed about every 3,000 to 5,000 miles, the brake fluid shouldn't be black and the antifreeze bottle should be at least half full. He says don't put water in the

antifreeze container use antifreeze coolant or you will damage the car. He also says not to open the antifreeze bottle when it's hot you can get burned. O'Neill says doing regular oil changes and pay attention to the engine light are crucial it can save you thousands of dollars.

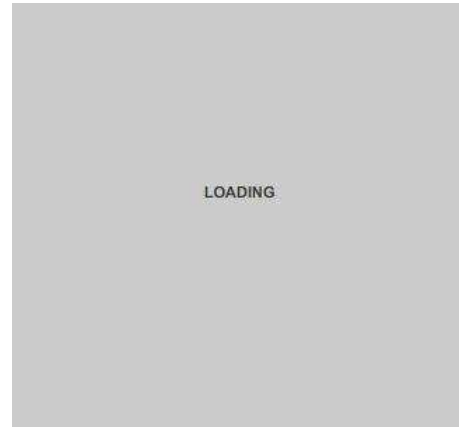
If you're told you need new parts, O'Neill says get a second opinion and ask for proof it'll save you money.

"Ask them to show them why you need it. If they're showing you a part and you're not sure have them show you a new part so you can compare the two and ask what's wrong with this part."

He also recommends establishing a relationship with a shop you trust, "If you take your car to different places they'll try to generate money off you try to sell you filters and flushes."

Also look for shops that have mechanics that have Automotive Service Excellence certification and get references. The final bill also includes labor, O'Neill says a reasonable amount is around \$45 an hour; some dealers will charge about \$90 dollars an hour and up.

Auto repair shops are apparently busier in this weak economy as more people fix their cars.



Bookmark and Share

[Furl](#) [Reddit](#) [Spurl](#) [Y! MyWeb](#)  
[Fark](#) [Del.icio.us](#) [Google](#) [StumbleUpon](#)  
[Digg](#) [Facebook](#) [Drudge](#) [College Humor](#)



### More Local News Headlines

[more >>](#)

- HOSPITAL LOCKDOWN OVER: White powder not harmful 25 mins ago | (10)
- BLOG: Anthrax scare in Sebring 3 hrs ago @Video
- Stormy weather in the Panhandle to move our way 3 hrs ago @Video
- Still no verdict in Megahed case 5 mins ago @Video
- INTERACTIVE MAP: Bay area's stimulus cash will target six big road headaches 2 hrs ago @Video

### Most Popular

[more >>](#)

- Stormy weather in the Panhandle to move our way
- HOSPITAL LOCKDOWN OVER: White powder not harmful

"Where a year or two ago say needs that trade it in now keeping it. Fixing a car is less expensive than sales tax you'd pay on a new car," says O'Neill.

Mary plans to keep her 10-year-old car that has 150,000 miles on it, except after Saturday's car clinic she hopes to be a smarter car owner.

There are still spaces available for Saturday's class to reserve a spot call the Ice Cold Air Discount Auto Repair shop at 727-461-5727.

You can also reserve a spot by going onto the company's website by clicking here at [www.icecoldair.net](http://www.icecoldair.net)

While the class is designed for women, men and teenage drivers are welcomed too, "We all drive no body wants to be on the side of the road. They teach sex end in schools they should teach car care too," says O'Neill.

The auto shop plans to hold additional clinics for men and teenagers in the future.