



Brakedown...

Published: December 3, 2014

Author: Kim Henson

Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/brakedown/>



It never ceases to amaze me that some people drive their car until either it comes to a complete halt, or the vehicle makes so much noise that the driver must be aware that something serious is wrong.

Usually this sort of noise occurs just before the car comes to an involuntary standstill, but in the case of a car recently brought to me for attention, it might not have been able to stop at all.

The owner complained that there seemed to be a loud grating noise and 'rough' feel every time the brakes were applied, and that he had noticed this over a period of a few weeks, with the noise getting louder each day.

On investigation it transpired that ALL the car's brake discs and pads were worn well past the point of no return. In fact the pads had been used until all the friction material had worn away, with the resulting metal-to-metal contact between discs and pads causing excessive friction and heat build-up, with the discs being written off due to severe grooving. It's a shame he had carried on driving it for some time before bringing it in for examination.

By the owner's admission the car had not been serviced in several years - and it now needed a great deal of other work too. As far as the brakes are concerned, it cost a great deal to renew the discs and pads. If the vehicle had been inspected regularly (so that the pad wear could have been identified at an earlier stage), it would just have required new pads.



I do try to tell customers that regular maintenance saves them money in the long run, but some still take some convincing – until they see a hefty bill as a result of their own negligence in not having their car serviced; definitely a false economy.

More serious than the cost issue alone is one of safety, of course... The brakes on this vehicle were in a dangerous condition and might have failed completely. Under prolonged, heavy braking (such as during long, steep descents), the pads' steel backing plates and the discs might have become 'welded' together. Good job this grumpy mechanic was able to fix the car before anything like that occurred!



Wot, no friction material? The brake pads on a vehicle recently brought to me for attention were completely worn away, taking the (expensive) discs with them. Even if you are not a do-it-yourself enthusiast when it comes to car maintenance, it always pays to have the vehicle serviced frequently/regularly, to avoid trouble.