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If you have a manual transmission car, you NEED to know how to use this maneuver! I have used this technique multiple times over the years in order to get myself out of a bind. In fact, I once used a car with a dead starter for over a month, relying solely on this technique to get it started whenever I needed to go somewhere. It's not only useful, but you can actually pretty fun as well!Table of ContentsDownload my free Car Maintenance Checklist.I'm using the term "Pop the clutch" because this technique is also referred to as push starting (Wikipedia), bump starting, or clutch starting. The basic idea is that you run the vehicle with your right foot either by coasting down an incline or by pushing it, then, when you have reached sufficient speed, put the vehicle in gear and let out the clutch abruptly. The spinning action of the wheels is transferred to the engine and performs the function of the starter which turns the engine over and starts the car. Follow these steps in order to pop the clutch and follow along with the schematic. Get in the car and turn the key to "on." Push in the clutch and put the transmission into 2nd gear. Why 2nd gear? The engine is easier to turn over in a higher gear. This can be vehicle dependent, so you may find that 1st works better for your car. (Another common method is to roll backwards and put the car in reverse.) Start the car rolling, either by getting a friend to push you by hand, bumper to bumper, or by rolling down an incline. Let the vehicle accelerate to 5-10 mph. Abruptly release ("pop") the clutch. Things will happen fairly quickly at this point. The car will probably jerk. The engine will turn over and (hopefully) start. As soon as the car starts, press in the clutch again to prevent a stall. This may not strictly be necessary, but until you get used to it, and the feel of your vehicle, this offers the best chance of success. The engine is now running, the clutch is pressed in, and the car is still coasting. Ease on the brake to bring the car to a stop. There are a few things you want to be careful of when you're doing this. If you have a friend or friends pushing your car by hand, make sure they are aware that there will be a violent jerk when you pop the clutch. You don't want one of them to lose a tooth... If you are having someone push your car bumper to bumper, take a lot of care. It can be really easy to dent a bumper or smash a tail light. If you opt to do the "reverse method" make sure you have a lot of situational awareness. Again, there is a lot going on in a short amount of time, so it is easy to lose track of where you are. Though it is fun to pop the clutch, you should be aware that it does cause extra wear on the clutch. Popping the clutch is a good technique to know to start a car with a dead battery, a non-functional starter, or just to impress your friends! Was this helpful? Let me know in the comments section below! It is important to take good care of your manual transmission. Read this post on how to change your manual transmission fluid. Check out these money-saving posts on DIY vehicle maintenance! Starting the engine in Neutral (manual gearbox) without depressing the clutch means the starter will have to get the engine parts moving, but also the main (input) shaft on the gearbox. Cold temperatures affect not only the oil in the engine, but also the lubricant inside the gear box. Thus the starter motor will have to contend with the slightly thicker oil within the gearbox at lower temperatures. As you drive, the gearbox oil heats up progressively due to friction between moving parts and also the oil itself getting into motion. As it heats up, it also thins out, giving better lubrication and making it easier for the driver to change gears (the gears enter better). Transmission oil also has the double viscosity grading system, such as "EP 75W/90": 75 when cold, 90 when warmed up. When both the engine and the gearbox oils are at working temperature, the engine may be started in Neutral without depressing the clutch. However, as pointed out by @Paulster2, best practice is still to depress the clutch when starting. Download Article Download Article If you have a dead battery in a car equipped with a manual transmission, push starting it is one way you can get it running. Jump starting your car is still the safest and easiest way to get the engine running, but if you don't have jumper cables or another car around, push starting can be accomplished with nothing more than the keys and a few friends to do the pushing. It's important to note that this process can only be done with vehicles equipped with manual transmissions. Attempting to push or pop start a vehicle with an automatic transmission could result in serious damage to the vehicle. Turn the key into the on position and release the parking brake. Press on the clutch and brake at the same time, then release the brake as your friends start to push the car. Once the speedometer reaches 5mph, quickly release the clutch to engage the engine. I look for signs of a dead battery. Confirm that the battery is indeed dead by turning the key in the ignition and seeing how the car reacts. Common signs of a dead battery include a clicking noise from the starter, the engine turning over slowly, and the dashboard lights not coming on.[1] If the dashboard lights come on but the starter clicks or turns over slowly, that's because there is power left in the battery, but not enough to start the engine. If nothing happens at all when you turn the key, the battery is completely dead. If all the lights come on and the engine keeps trying to turn over without starting, the issue is not the battery. 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Press the clutch with your left foot and then slide the gear selector all the way to the left and back to place it in second gear.[5] First gear has a lot of torque, so the vehicle could buck unexpectedly if you use it instead of second gear. You need to achieve a higher speed to push start the vehicle in third gear than you do in second. 2 Release the parking brake and press the brake and clutch pedals down. Depending on your car, the parking brake will either be a peddle located near your left knee while in the driver's seat or a handle in the center console. Press the clutch with your left foot and the brake with your right after you release the parking brake.[6] If you are unsure of where to find the parking brake, refer to the vehicle's owner's manual or the manufacturer's website. If you are on a slope, be sure to hold the brake pedal down as you release the parking brake to prevent rolling. 3 Release the brake as your friends start to push the car. 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You don't need to give the engine any gas, but may choose to. Remember that doing so will make the engine and car both accelerate. 5 Keep a tight grip on the steering wheel, especially in front wheel drive cars. Front wheel drive cars are prone to torque steer, which is when the engine's torque turning the wheels also turns the steering wheel to one side. Keep a tight grip on the wheel to prevent the car from changing direction.[9] Torque steer happens only briefly as the engine tries to turn the wheels faster than they're already turning. Torque steer will just feel like a short jerk in the wheel as the engine starts. 6 Try again if the engine didn't start. If the engine failed to start but the car is still rolling, press the clutch pedal all the way to the floor and then drop it again. Have your friends keep pushing to help bring up the speed as you do. [10] If the engine fails to start, it's likely because you weren't rolling fast enough. 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