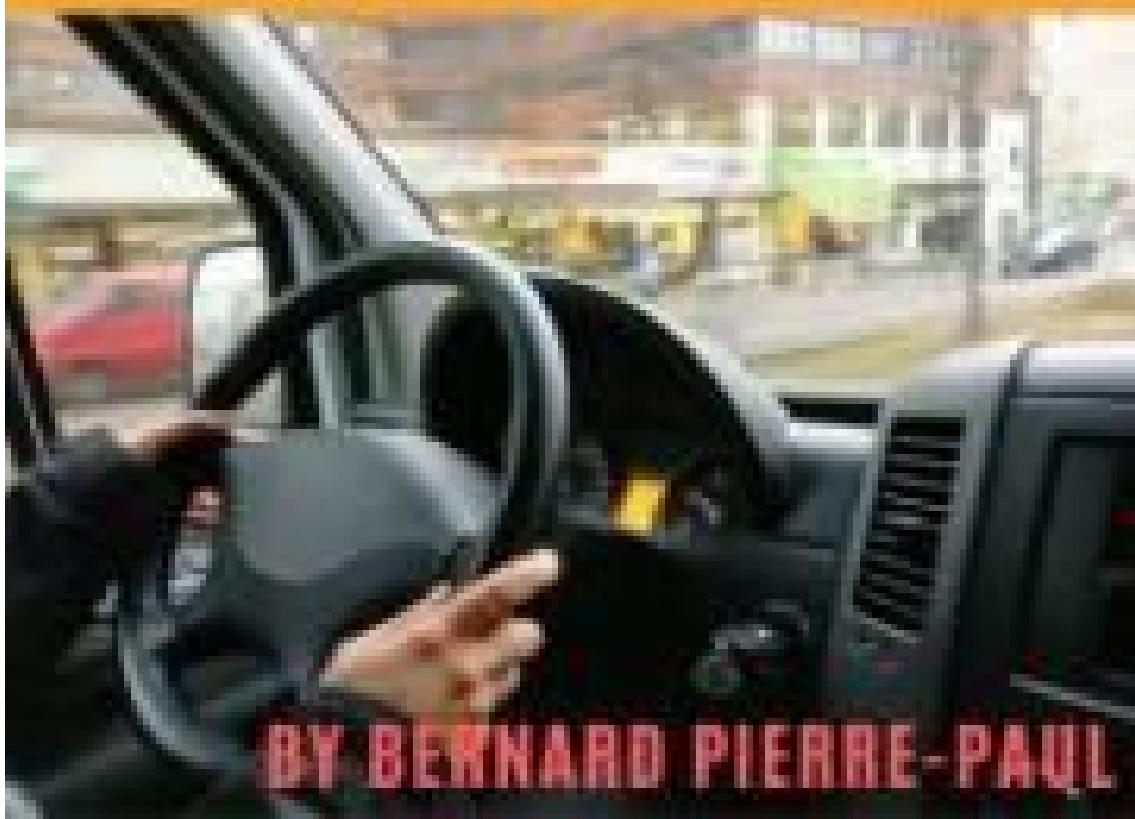


HOW TO DRIVE MADE SIMPLE:

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE



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How to Drive a Car Made Simple: A Step-By-Step Guide

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Introduction

If you haven't known how to drive, it may look intimidating, especially from the passenger's seat. However, the moment you get into the driver's seat and place your foot on the pedal, the entire process becomes super intuitive.

When starting out, try to keep things slow first. Soon, you'll master the driving basics.

If it's your first time to drive, fear can easily consume you. In fact, some people aren't confident even after attending a driving school.

In this guide, you will learn how to drive a car with confidence even if it's your first time. You are going to learn everything from the basics to the most advanced stuff.

Let's get started.

Chapter 1: How to Drive a Car for the First Time

Overcoming the Fear of Driving for the First Time

It's completely normal to feel afraid when driving for the first time, but you can do a number of things to boost your confidence. To overcome the fear of driving, you may want to:

- Get ready to drive by learning about the car you'd like to drive.
- Learn how to handle things that might arise on the road.
- Adjust the settings of your car before driving
- Get rid of any distractions.
- Get a supportive friend to ride in the vehicle with you.
- Drive during daytime so you can enjoy good visibility.

Let's look at what you need to do in details:

1. Gain More Knowledge about Driving

Driving is broad and it's good to be familiar with the different tasks related to it because you can encounter any of these tasks while behind the wheel. By being ready for such possibilities, you'll eliminate the worry and uncertainty associated with driving. The tasks you should be familiar with include:

- Pumping gas
- Jumpstarting your car
- Changing the tire
- Adding a windshield washer fluid

Learn about the car you're driving

Before driving, learn everything possible you can about the vehicle you'd like to drive, as that'll give you more control while driving. Go through the car's manual to know more about its features, the location of various parts, and how to operate different car sections.

Sit in your driver's seat so you can locate all the basic controls, including horn, lights, blinker, and pedals.

Seek Advice from Family and Friends

One of the best ways to help you reduce nervousness about driving when it's your first time, is to ask your family and friends to share their first-time experiences in driving. Ask them whether they felt a little nervous while driving for the first time and how they handled it. Seek their advice on how to best deal with fear during your first time behind the wheel.

Plan out a Route Beforehand

To avoid unnecessary anxiety while driving, know the route you'll follow before getting into the car. Be sure to select areas you understand pretty well and are comfortable with. Choose streets with minimal traffic to enable you drive carefully and not worry about impatient drivers.

2. Adjust Things in the Car

Driving successfully during the first time also depends on how well you adjust various parts inside the car. Here is how to go about it:

Position the Seat

Before you start driving, you should ensure the driver's seat is in the right position so your feet can reach the pedals effortlessly. Sit up straight and ensure that one of your heels is on the floor while the ball of the other foot presses against the pedals.

Ensure you feel comfortable while in the seat so you can drive with confidence. When sitting up straight, don't bend your knees excessively, as it can hinder you from properly operating the foot pedals during driving.

Put the Rear-View Mirrors in the Right Position

Adjusting the rear-view mirrors is crucial before you drive. When in the driver's seat, look at the car's center mirror and adjust it in such a way that you can visualize the whole rear-view window.

Move each side mirror such that you can barely see the car when leaning in the direction of the mirror.

While sitting in the parked car, check the mirrors' settings before driving. Be sure you can observe passing cars through the mirrors.

Eliminate Distractions

Switch off the phone or turn the silent mode on so you don't receive texts, calls, or app notifications that may distract you. Besides, don't drive with someone that might upset or distract you. Leave your iPod or radio off to stay focused while driving.

Adjust the Temperature

Set the car's temperature before you start driving. If you let the heat or air conditioning to operate too high as you drive, you might lose focus from the road.

And playing with the vehicle's climate settings while driving is risky and can cause accidents; so avoid that.

3. Reduce Anxiety

Anxiety can take a toll on you if you are getting behind the wheel for the first time. But, you don't have to worry because even the best drivers started somewhere one day. So, if you are feeling anxious, do the following:

Do Breathing Exercises

To feel relaxed and gain focus before you drive, perform some breathing exercises.

- Slowly, take a deep breath and hold it to the count of four.
- Slowly, breathe out through the mouth.
- Repeat this exercise four times until you experience calmness.

Take a family member or close friend with you

To avoid some anxiety, get someone you trust to go along with you when driving for the first time. You may want to take a close friend or relative along provided the person is a great driver. This way, the person will guide you accordingly as you drive.

Don't choose an individual that makes you stressed or impatient, as it can worsen your driving experience.

Don't Drive at Night

Because of reduced visibility, you shouldn't drive at night. Of course, once you gain some experience and become comfortable as a driver, you can drive anytime you want.

But as a first-timer, you should stay away from nighttime driving and only go out to drive during the day. During daytime, you can easily see signs, other cars, and pedestrians.

Drive when there's No Heavy Traffic

To minimize anxiety, you should drive at a time when traffic is not heavy. A good way to do this is to drive during weekdays and not on weekends.

During weekends, cars flood the road, increasing the risk of accidents. So, you want to stay away from that. If possible, you should go on the road on a day of the week, as there's a reduced accident risk at that time.

8 Quick Tips on Learning to Drive a Car for the First Time

Whether you are attending [driving lessons](#) or learning on your own, getting some concepts clear will come in handy to help you learn how to drive.

Knowing how the car's gears work, the best way to stop, or the ideal way to drive on the road is crucial to help you drive more safely and absorb more content during your driving lessons.

Here are practical tips to help you learn to drive a car for the first time:

Have some knowledge on speeds

It's important that you know the speed limit you ought to stick to. The lower a gear, the greater power the engine contains. However, as the car gains speed, you'll need to move the gears up so the vehicle can use less power.

Don't always start in the first gear

It's not all the time that you have to start a car in the first gear. For instance, while moving downhill, you may only need to release the brakes for the vehicle to move forward. So, starting it in second gear is completely fine.

However, if you are [driving on a slippery road](#), you should consider driving in high gears. The reason is high gears have less pressure and thus, the car is not likely to skid.

Know when to change gears

Inexperienced drivers usually prefer to drive in a low gear until the hit top speeds. But, remember, it's possible to engage the fifth gear while driving at 45 mph.

Get used to the engine's noise while driving. If it gets too loud, it's probably time to switch to a higher gear. If it sounds waning, on the other hand, you should engage a lower gear.

Importantly, this depends on the car and its power. When you start taking the [driving lessons](#), your instructor will guide you on how to shift gears in a particular car you will be driving.

Later, when you pass the test and start driving your own car, you'll be able to tell when you need to change gears, because you may be using a different car from the one you had during the driving lessons.

Positioning of arms on a steering wheel

It's important that you know how to position your arms on the wheel so you don't cross your arms when driving around a tight bend. Therefore, when making a sharp turn, hold your hands to resemble a clock at 10 past 10.

Keep your hands there and keep sliding the steering wheel between your hands as you turn around the bend. Don't move your arms.

Controlling speed when driving around a sharp turn

One of the things new drivers need to know is taking a bend from the perspective of speed. Whether the bend is sharp or smooth, you should follow this basic principle: lower the speed by 50 percent and start accelerating once you've passed the bend and are driving past it.

You should always stay in your lane at a speed that allows you to control the car. It's better to start going slow at first instead of braking abruptly as the vehicle loses control.

Braking the car

To slow the car, you don't always need to go with the brake pedals. The other option you may use to slow down a car is by moving down the gear. And you should do it gradually, as vehicles may not go at high speeds under low gears.

Have an in-depth knowledge of your car

When you know your car well, you can drive it safely as well as control it. Take the time to read the manual so you know where different features are, such as:

- The horn
- Type of fuel
- Lights
- How to open a bonnet

The first thing you'll probably do when you get into a vehicle is to familiarize yourself with various features. To achieve this, go the car's cockpit drill – the spot with all the basic functions and controls of the car.

It's critical that you know the above things as you learn how to drive so you eliminate all doubts. If you learn it from a driving school, ask all the questions you may have, even if you think they are obvious. The instructors at [Pierre Paul Driving School](#) are patient with all students and will respond to all your questions.

Chapter 2: How to Drive a Car with Automatic Transmission

Introduction

Both experienced and novice drivers like driving cars with an automatic transmission. Automatic cars are generally easier to operate than manual cars, and it's comfortable to drive them over a long distance.

Here are simple steps to follow as you learn how to drive an automatic car. But, before you operate any vehicle, ensure you've got a valid driver's license and have a good understanding of the traffic laws in your state. Good, for you, at Pierre Paul Driving School, we offer top-notch lessons to prepare you for a road test and driver's license.

To drive a car with an automatic transmission, follow these steps:

1. Preparing to Drive

Get into the car

Use a key or clicker to unlock the vehicle and get into the driver's seat.

Adjust the motor vehicle to your needs

Alter the seat in a suitable direction so you can access any controls and see clearly outside the windows. Adjust the mirrors to be able to see the vehicle's sides and back well. Adjust the blind spots of the car before you begin driving so you can check them well before you make lane changes or any turns.

Identify the Car's Controls

It's important that you locate the brake pedals, steering wheel, accelerator, light controls, windshield wipers, gear selector lever, and defroster before you start.

- You can find the accelerator and brake pedals at the bottom front of the section near your feet. Typically, the accelerator is located on the right and the brake pedal on the left.
- The steering wheel is a big wheel located in the middle of the driver's console. You should move it to the right and left
- Found at the left hand side of the steering column is a small lever with a rest position at the center and two locking positions below and above. This is known as the turn signal. And on the left side of the steering wheel usually mounted into a knob or console on a steering column's lever , is the control used for turning the headlights on or off.
- The gear selector lever is usually located in of these places: you either can find it between the passenger's and driver 's seats or mounted to the steering column's right side. It has display indicators labelled with letters D, N, R and P along with some numbers. On the shifting levers of the steering column, the display is normally found on the instrument panel, below the speedometer.

- ✓ P – Park. It locks the transmission and is usually selected when a motor vehicle is not moving
- ✓ R – Reverse
- ✓ N – Neutral
- ✓ D – Drive. Select it when you want to drive forward
- ✓ 1 – First gear
- ✓ 2 – Second gear

You may be wondering why an automatic vehicle has the first and second gear for you to select. Well, at times, you may need to override the automatic system and choose a low gear, for example, when riding down a hill. During such a scenario, the automatic transmission may try switch into a higher gear, but to enhance safety, it's recommended that you drive down the hill in a lower gear, which is why you need a manual override.

There's a growing popularity in semi-automatic transmissions, with a manual gearshift that gives you control over the gears you can select. But this option doesn't apply for the clutch pedal, which is automatically operated each time there's selection of a new gear.

Fasten the Seatbelt

Ensure that you and any other person in the vehicle is wearing a seat belt every time.

2. Operating the Automatic Car in “Drive”

Now that you know how get ready for a drive, it's time to actually drive. So, how do you go about it? It's much easier than you probably think. Let's look at the steps.

Start the car

Put the right foot on the vehicle's brake pedal and then push it downwards. After that, insert the key, then turn it in the clockwise direction to start off the car.

Select the gear

While keeping your foot on the brake pedal, move the gear level so it displays “Drive.” The gear has a “D” label on the display panel. It'll be highlighted once you correctly select it.

- For shift levers attached on the steering column, you should pull the lever in your direction before you move it up and down while selecting a gear.
- For those shift levers attached on the floor, you'll find a side button for unlocking the lever. You can move it along its track to for a position.

Disengage the Parking Brake

This can be the lever between the car's two front seats or a pedal found on far left of the foot section. The lower parking brake may have a release lever above it. On the other hand, the topside model has a push button that you need to press to disengage the parking brake.

Check the Surroundings

Look around the vehicle , including the blind spots, to see whether you can see any moving people or objects. Be sure to keep looking at the direction you'd like to go.

Get the Car Moving

Gradually, release the pressure from the brake pedal and the vehicle will start moving slowly. Remove your foot from the brake and shift it to the gas pedal then press it gently. The car will start moving faster. In regular road driving, you don't need to change gears with regard to speed.

Use the Steering Wheel to Turn the Vehicle

While in "Drive" gear, turn the wheel right to move the car to the right and turn it left to move the car to the left.

Use the Brakes to Slow or Stop the Vehicle

When driving, you may want to stop somewhere for any reason. Brakes are there to help exactly with that. To use them, remove your foot from the accelerator pedal and place it on the brake. Apply gradual pressure so you don't come to an abrupt halt.

To start moving again, take your foot to the accelerator again.

Park the Vehicle

Once you reach the destination, completely bring the car to a stop by gradually applying pressure to the brake pedal. You should also adjust the shift lever back to the "P" state.

To turn off the car engine, turn the key counter-clockwise. Remember to turn off the headlights and put the parking brake in place before moving out of the vehicle.

3. Operating Alternative Gears

As mentioned earlier, an automatic car has several gears other than the "P" and "Drive" gears. Let's look at how you should operate the rest of the gears.

Reverse Gear (R)

If you'd like to drive backwards, ensure you:

- Put the motor vehicle to a complete stop before engaging the reverse gear.
- Adjust the gear shift to align with the gear labelled "R"
- Check around/behind for possible obstructions
- Gently get your foot off the brake and put it on the accelerator

When driving in reverse, the vehicle will turn in a direction similar to that of the wheel. You're moving backwards, and so the car's end will swing towards that direction instead of the front.

Lower Gears (1, 2, & 3)

The gears labelled "1," "2," and "3" are referred to as the lower gears. They can act as your in-engine braking system when you'd like to save the actual brakes. A good time to use this approach is when moving down a steep hill. However, you should only use the first gear when making a very slow movement. You don't need to stop when adjusting between "Drive" and these gears.

Neutral Gear (N)

You can only use the neutral gear when there's no need to control your vehicle's speed, but not when doing a regular drive. Examples of situations that require a neutral drive is when being towed, pushed or when stopped in traffic.

Let's look at each of these situations in details:

When to Use the Neutral Gear in an Automatic Car

For many years, most automobile owners have failed to know when to use the "N" or Neutral gear. At times, the owner's manual may not tell you when to use the gear and at times, your [driving instructor](#) or parents didn't elaborate the neutral gear's use clearly.

It's uncommon to find many drivers who have never used the neutral gear or have no clue of what to do with it. Lots of explanations exist for either positions and most people will tell you that turning to the neutral gear may damage the car's transmission.

For the record, here are the scenarios under which you should switch to the neutral gear:

1. When Stopped in Traffic

If stopped amidst traffic or at a red alert, that's the time to switch to a neutral gear until the green light shows. Most people tend to argue that using the neutral gear all the time could damage the transmission.

While this may be true to some extent, it's less damaging compared to the alternative. When you remain in "D" or "Drive" after stopping, you're actually using the transmission fluid and gradually wearing down the vehicle's transmission clutches.

You're also wearing down and heating up the brake pads by preventing the vehicle from moving forward when it should.

In older vehicles, the automatic transmission doesn't usually cut fuel to the engine when stopped in the drive mode. That means switching to neutral may save your fuel as well.

Besides, if you lift your foot by mistake, it could lead to an accident. Thus, switching to a neutral gear after being stopped is a good way to (temporarily) rest your tired feet.

Just ensure you don't stop at an incline that could make your vehicle to roll into another person's, and be swift to turn back to drive once the light turns green.

Pro tip: When stopped in traffic, don't enable the "P" or Park gear, as it can cause critical transmission damage and ultimately, failure.

2. When Towing the Vehicle

Before you tow a car, always check the owner's manual regarding the right towing guidelines. Towing a vehicle in neutral isn't the suggested technique, but at times, you don't have a choice.

Sometimes the towing company has no tow dolly and you need to flat-tow. When this happens, keep your car on and adjust it to neutral to reduce transmission damage.

3. When Pushing the Vehicle

If you've ever been stuck in the middle of [the highway](#) or road, you'll keep wondering how far away you'll have to push. But, with a hand or two, it gets a whole lot easier.

This is where the “N” gear comes in handy. Just adjust the gear to neutral and start the push. Ensure there’s someone in control of the steering wheel so you can get somewhere safe pretty quickly. Additionally, if you’re stuck in snow or mud, you can use the “N” to get your vehicle out of this slippery state.

When Not to Use the Neutral Gear

When coasting downhill, don’t switch to neutral as it’s not recommended. It doesn’t really save you fuel except for edge cases. It wears down the transmission similar to when in the ‘Drive’ gear. Also, when coasting in neutral, you’ll have less control on the car, thus it becomes more of a safety issue than a maintenance one.

8 Things You Should Avoid When Driving an Automatic Car

While driving a transmission car is safe, you need to avoid some things at all costs when behind the wheel. Here are top seven mistakes that could damage your vehicle and cost you a lot in repairs.

1. Sliding the automobile downhill in a neutral mode

Switching to the neutral mode cuts on the supply of oil, so the transmission doesn’t receive the required lubrication to operate smoothly. The outcome is a lot of damage and wear.

Thus, it’s recommended that you don’t drive the car downhill because the repair costs aren’t worth the small fuel savings.

When the vehicle is in gear, the existing friction between the gearbox and engine (since they’re connected) will lower the car’s speed (a process known as engine braking).

But, in the neutral mode, the gearbox and engine are not connected and thus, there’s no friction between them. That means, the vehicle will require more braking power to bring it to a halt, and that can be risky when driving down a hill because the speed will rise.

2. Revving the car’s engine before adjusting to a suitable gear

You may have done this as a teenager and your parents took care of the bills, right? When you rev the engine before you switch to a gear, it adds a huge shock to the transmission, which causes more friction between the internal components. The result is damaged engine parts.

3. Switching gears when the vehicle is rolling

It quickly alters the direction of the transmission components and this wears out the gear box significantly. Instead, you should apply the brakes to stop the car. Some drivers shift to the Park gear before they push the brakes; this can damage the gearbox as well.

4. Turning to neutral when the lights turn red

Most drivers usually do this for the sake of saving fuel and protecting the driveline from wear. However, by pushing the brakes and using the Drive mode, you’ll minimize the loss. A lot of damage occurs when you engage and disengage the neutral mode.

5. Enabling the Parking gear before you completely stop the car

Switching to the Park mode inserts a locking pin into the gear connected to the gearbox’s shaft. Remember the wheels are attached to the shaft too. Thus, locking it while letting the vehicle roll, can break the locking pin.

6. Driving before you warm the engine

This is a mistake, particularly in winter. In cold weather, oil thickens and moves gradually. That's why you should allow the fuel a minute to move around the transmission and other parts. Shifting into the "D" gear and speeding off from the start can severely damage the car's internal storage.

7. Keeping the tank low on fuel

An automatic car mainly relies on fluid pressure to operate smoothly. Besides, fuel enables the engine and other elements of a car to stay lubricated and cool. Thus, these may wear out rapidly if you constantly don't fill the fuel tank to the required volume.

8. Using two feet at the same time

For an automated car, you don't have to use both feet; one on the accelerator and the other one on the brake. This is because you aren't supposed to hit the accelerator and brake simultaneously.

In the event of a sudden stop or accident, you may not have the time to figure out the right foot to use. Thus, just use one foot and switch between the brake and accelerator pedals. And rest the second foot on the rest provided.

Important Tips for Driving an Automatic Car

- Check the mirrors often.
- Drive defensively and check the surroundings when operating the vehicle.
- When applying pressure to both the accelerator and brake, do it gently and gradually.
- Don't place one foot on the accelerator pedal and the other one on the brake pedal. Instead, use the right foot for both of these pedals. Place the left foot on the vehicle floor.
- Always be attentive to traffic signals.
- To optimize fuel consumption, avoid pressing the accelerator continually, as it keeps the pressure of the torque to a lower point.

Warnings

- Focus your eyes on the road; don't drive as you text.
- Always drive with a valid driver's license and follow the traffic laws in your state.
- Lock the vehicle when not using it
- Never drive when under alcohol's influence
- When switching from "D" to "R" or vice versa, bring the car to a complete stop before you select either "D" or "R." Otherwise, it might damage the transmission seriously.
- Always bring the motor vehicle to a complete stop before you engage the "P" or else severe transmission damage may occur.

Driving in Heavy Traffic: 8 Easy Tips to Help You Reach Your Destination Faster

Rush hour is one of the nightmares to all drivers. With an increase in the number of vehicles and their users, heavy traffic is inevitable whether it's normal hour or rush hour.

So, to help you reach the destination promptly, here are smart tips you can use every time there's traffic:

1. Plan the Driving Times

To have a successful trip, you'll need to plan for it beforehand, and the same applies to driving. Expert drivers plan their time carefully even before they get behind the wheel.

Often, you can avoid a heavy jam with twenty minutes after or before the rush hour. While it depends on the city you are in, the rush hour is typically from 7am to 9am and from 5pm to 7pm. So, you want to ensure you are on the road before or after these times.

2. Remove all Distractions

When there's heavy traffic, the road is usually flooded with vehicles and some drivers will start to get impatient, which may cause them to try and merge where they shouldn't.

Since you are caught up in the same traffic, you need to pay attention to all these things. And to achieve this, you need to avoid all distractions by:

- Putting the phone in silent mode or turning it off
- Turning off the music or lowering the volume
- Advising other people in your car to remain patient until the dense traffic moves

3. Drive Defensively

Defensive driving entails a wide array of skills that you need to use to avert dangerous situations out there before they arise.

You need to plan on how you can react to emergencies, such as if another driver tries to merge into you. Additionally, you should:

- Be alert and use your eyes to scan the traffic and other road conditions
- Take note of vehicles that don't see safe, like those that are always merging into other lanes, over speeding or drifting in a lane.
- Signal before you merge or turn into a lane
- Follow the traffic flow
- Don't drive while fatigued or emotionally agitated
- Allow enough space between your vehicle and other vehicles

You can read more about [defensive driving techniques, especially for teen drivers here](#).

4. Pay attention to traffic from a distance

When approaching a section with heavy traffic, you should remove your foot from the accelerator and start coasting forward, letting friction to slow the vehicle. This will not only save your fuel, but also moderate your speed.

Depending on how far you are from the heavy traffic, you may brake so you slow down to a specific speed as you approach the traffic.

When you slow the speed, chances are the heavy traffic might break up way before you reach there. By driving at a constant, slow speed, you'll save fuel and prevent the likelihood of accidents.

5. Engage Engine Efficiency with Lower Gears

Even for automatic cars where you don't usually need to shift out of the "Drive" except when you want to reverse or park, there are at times lower gear settings.

To identify them, you'll see the gearstick marked by "D" along with numbers, such as D2 or D3.

- Usually, D3 or 3 is ideal for stop and go driving
- 2, D2, or S (slow) locks the vehicle into second gear that can be necessary if driving down or up a steep hill.
- A lower gear will also brake faster because of the natural "engine braking."

6. Drive at 5 mph (or 8 k/hr) below the Speed Limit, Including on the Highway

You need to feel safe while driving in traffic and that may mean driving a bit slower than the traffic flow. But if you drive too slowly, you might make the other drivers impatient, causing dangerous driving circumstances.

The stop-and-go traffic speed will significantly reduce, which means that if you or another vehicle collides, the resulting damage won't be physically serious. It'll be minimal too.

7. Get Prepared for Emergency Maneuvers

While in heavy traffic, impatient drivers can make poor decisions, which may require you to take other measures to ensure an accident doesn't occur. Sometimes, you may be required to merge out of the lane you are in and onto the shoulder.

Use your eyes to scan the traffic, the road's shoulder, and possible areas you may direct the vehicle in case you are forced to make an emergency maneuver.

8. Avoid the Freeway if You Feel Uncomfortable

How you feel emotionally can affect your ability to drive, and being anxious can have a negative effect on the way you handle heavy traffic. If the driving situation ever makes you feel too overwhelmed, you need to:

- Get out of the freeway and move to a rest stop until you calm down or the traffic breaks.
- Turn on your car's emergency lights and pull over to the roadside. Play some music so you can relax until you feel more comfortable to get back to traffic.

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