

LEARNING HOW TO DRIVE A CAR

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Getting comfortable with the car's controls

1. Adjust the seat so that your feet comfortably reach both pedals. You can adjust your seat forward and backward, as well as up and down.
2. Familiarize yourself with the foot pedals. In an automatic car, the two foot pedals control acceleration and braking, respectively. The rightmost pedal is the acceleration pedal. The pedal to the left is the brake pedal. Never use both feet at once to reach the pedals. Only use one foot, your right foot to access each pedal. This will make it impossible to accidentally press down on both pedals at the same time.
3. Adjust your car's mirrors so that you can see through them clearly and effectively. Your car should have three mirrors: one rear view mirror, which allows you to see directly behind the rear windshield in back of you, and two outside mirror which let you see to either side of the car and protect you from blind spots.
4. Know where the parking brake. The parking brake is a longer lever with a button on its very tip. When the parking brake is pulled up, it helps lock the car in place, ensuring that it doesn't move and letting it down, it is disengaged and the car can freely move. The parking brake should be disengaged before you start driving.
5. Get a feel for the shift lever, usually positioned in between the two front seats of a car, and it controls some of the car's gears (park, neutral, drive, reverse). If your shift lever is engaged in Park and you turn your car on, your car won't move forward. If your shift lever is in Neutral, your car's natural momentum will continue to carry it forward. If your shift lever is in Reverse, your car will move backwards instead of moving forwards when you take your foot off the brake. If your shift lever is in Drive, your car will move forwards when you take your foot off the brake.
6. Understand your basic dashboard controls. These guages help in showing the driver how much gas the car is carrying, how fast the car is going, and how hot the engine is.

Getting the Basics Down

1. Put on your seatbelt. In most places in the world, driving without a seatbelt is illegal. Seat-belts greatly reduce the possibility of serious injury or death if you happen to get in an accident.
2. Always start your car with your foot on the brake. When you turn it on, a car will move forward automatically if your foot isn't on the brake. With your foot on the brake in starting position, you're ready to start driving!
3. Turn on the engine and release the parking brake, if necessary. Put

your keys in the ignition, which is usually to the right side of the steering wheel, and turn clockwise.

4. Learn how to back your car out. If your car is parked in a lot or a driveway, chances are you're going to need to back your car out in order to begin driving. Look over your shoulder and turn your head to get a good view of where you're going. Gently remove your foot from the brake pedal and do not put your foot on the acceleration. You can move your car simply by removing your foot from the brake. Your car will move slowly. Remember that the steering wheel is "reversed" in Reverse. When driving your car forward, if you turn the steering wheel to the right, your car will also turn to the right, and vice versa, because the wheels turn that way. When going in reverse, turning the steering wheel to the right turns the car to the left, while turning the steering wheel to the left turns the car to the right. Keep this in mind as you back your car out. Use your brake whenever you need to slow down. Press your foot gently but firmly on the brake pedal to slow the car down.

5. When you're ready to move your car forward, come to a complete stop and shift the car into Drive. Put your foot on the brake pedal, shift your car into Drive so that it can begin to move forward, and then take your foot off the brake pedal. Slowly press down on the acceleration pedal with your foot to get the car to move forward. Accelerate until you've reached the speed limit, and then take your foot off the acceleration, hovering it over the brake pedal in case you need to start braking.

6. Hold both hands on the steering wheel. For beginners, do not try holding the steering wheel with only one hand.

7. Use your blinkers. Your blinkers are flashing orange lights or red, next to the brake lights. They are really important in driving. They let other cars know that you're switching lanes or turning. The blinker switch is located on the right side of the steering wheel. Press it up for turning or switching lanes to the right or press it down for turning or switching lanes to the left.

8. Learn how to turn the car using the hand over hand method. If you only need to turn the car slightly, turn the steering wheel in the direction you want to turn but try keeping your hands on the steering wheel. To straighten out the car after a turn, simply loosen your grip in both hands and the steering wheel will automatically begin correcting itself. Apply more pressure to slow down the correction; apply less pressure to speed it up. Your hands should stay stationary as the steering wheel moves back to its original spot. 9. Learn how to switch lanes. Doing so is easy, but you have

to remember to indicate with your blinkers to let other drivers know that you're planning on switching lanes. Indicate with your blinkers for at least two seconds before beginning to switch lanes. This lets other drivers know what you are planning to do. Quickly scan your mirrors and look over your shoulder to check for any cars in your blind spot(s). Don't just rely on your mirrors to tell you where other cars are; use your eyes to quickly look for yourself before actually switching lanes. Slowly move the car into the other lane. It's a very slight movement.

10. Stay a healthy distance behind other cars. How far you should stay behind the next car in front of you depends on how fast you are traveling. If the car in front of you were to abruptly come to a halt, at your current speed, would you have enough time to both react and calmly slow your car down without crushing? To judge this, watch as the car in front of you passes a fixed object on the road, like a billboard. As soon as the car passes that object, how many seconds does it take for your car to pass the same object on the road?

Putting It All Together

1. Drive defensively. Driving defensively will help save you money, ensure a pleasurable driving experience, and most important help you stay alive. Don't assume that people will follow the rules, or pay attention, or be cautious. Rules of the road are enforced to make sure that everyone is safe. If you see a potentially dangerous situation, avoid it before it happens. Use all your senses to be aware, at all times, of what's happening on the road. Use hearing to listen for car horns and the sounds of screeching. Stay in the right lanes for slower speeds and the left lanes for faster speeds. On highways, and to a lesser extent on streets, the rightmost lanes are usually reserved for faster traffic, while the leftmost lanes are reserved for slower traffic. Get in a lane that's going roughly your speed and stay there until you need to turn or get off.

2. Abide by the speed limits. Speed limits exist for a reason. They exist to make the road a safer place for all. 3. Be extremely careful in abnormal driving conditions. When the weather acts up, tone it down a notch and drive even more defensively than normal.

4. Be courteous on the road. Being courteous simply means acknowledging that there are other people on the road, each with his or her own agenda, and many of whom don't want to be stuck in their car. Use your horn to alert other drivers, not to chide them. Use your horn when someone merges into your lane without seeing you, or when a light has turned green

but they're still daydreaming. Use a wave to thank someone. When someone lets you into their lane.

5. Have fun. Driving can be dangerous, and there sure are a lot of rules that you need to remember, but it's important to have fun while you're behind the wheel.

Mastering Advanced Driving Techniques

1. Learn how to parallel park. Parallel parking is when you have to back your car into a tight parking spot, usually a very difficult maneuver.

2. Learn how to merge in heavy traffic. Merging onto a highway can be a difficult thing to do, especially if the traffic is denser than expected. The important thing to do here is accelerate enough and judge whether you're going fast enough to fit safely between two cars.

3. Use a roundabout. Often used instead of stop signs, roundabouts are efficient but need to be understood before conquered.

4. Save gas. With the rising cost of gas or petrol, driving smart means more than just avoiding accidents. Those drivers who can save gas while they drive ultimately have more money to spend on car accessories.