



**Are you an  
older driver?**

**[www.roadwise.co.uk](http://www.roadwise.co.uk)**

**95 ALIVE**

The York & North Yorkshire  
Road Safety Partnership

# The older driver

Just because we're getting older doesn't mean that we need to give up driving...

In fact, as long as we drive safely, it's quite the opposite. We now have more time than ever to shop, socialise and visit friends. We want independence, freedom and to enjoy our life – after all, these are our golden years and we've finally got the time to enjoy ourselves!

We don't want to be taken off the road; we want to keep driving for as long as possible – but safely.

As an older driver we have many years' driving experience which contributes to making our age group safer on the road than any other age groups.

**Older drivers have far fewer crashes than younger drivers but people aged 50 plus are more likely than younger people to die or be seriously injured as a result of a car crash.**



In today's society there is considerably more traffic on the road, with more complex road networks, which makes driving more challenging and demanding than it used to be.

As an older driver, our ability to interpret the movements and intentions of other drivers and react to situations gradually changes.

- Our sight, hearing and judgement of speed may not be as sharp as they were when we were younger.
- Weaker muscles and stiffening joints make it difficult for us to turn our heads to check blind spots.
- Conditions such as arthritis can make it more difficult for us to turn our heads, grip and turn the steering wheel, press the accelerator or brake.
- Our reactions are slower than they once were.

We need to adjust our driving habits to compensate for all of the above so that we can continue to drive safely and confidently for many years to come.



## Be prepared

By being prepared before going out on the road we are less likely to become stressed while driving. We should always:

- Drive a reliable, safe, car that suits our needs.
- Make sure our windscreen and door mirrors are clean and that all mirrors are properly adjusted.
- Keep our vehicle mechanically sound and ensure that we have emergency equipment in the boot; first aid kit, warning triangle etc.
- Plan our journey in advance.
- Allow plenty of time for our journey.
- Take regular breaks during long journeys.
- Avoid travelling at peak times, where possible.

# Safer driving tips

At all times, we should:

- Keep a close eye on the road ahead, road signs and road markings.
- Stay alert. It only takes a second for a pedestrian to step out, a vehicle to pull out in front of us or the car in front to brake suddenly.
- Check our mirrors, signal and check our blind spot before making a manoeuvre.
- Wear a seat belt; a seat belt is the single best form of protection for anyone in a car.
- Stick to the speed limit.
- Keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front. In good conditions this means a two-second gap, a four-second gap on wet roads and longer on icy roads.
- Take extra care at junctions and intersections – it's easy to feel pressurised to move before it is safe to do so.
- Drive with courtesy and consideration for other road users.

**A typical driver makes 20 decisions per mile, with less than half a second to act to avoid a collision.**

# Eyesight, hearing and driving

Our eyesight and hearing can deteriorate gradually with age and affect our fitness to drive; night vision in particular may be impaired as our eyes take longer to recover from glaring lights.





Those of us with uncorrected hearing problems may not hear emergency vehicles or other motorists warning us of potential hazards.

As an older driver we should:

- Get our eyes checked regularly, as we may not be aware of deterioration.
- Get our hearing checked out during a visit to the doctor.
- Slow down if dazzled by headlight glare and blink to re-focus our eyes.
- Make sure that we wear glasses or contact lenses if we need them to drive.
- Wear a hearing aid whilst driving, if we need one.
- Ask our doctor whether we need to report any medical conditions to the DVLA.

**Your insurance may be at risk if you are unable to pass an eyesight test.**



## Medication and driving

Driving under the influence of drugs is illegal; this includes prescription and certain over the counter drugs.

Medication can:

- Cause drowsiness
- Blur vision
- Slow reaction times

If you are on prescribed medication ask your doctor if it could affect your driving.

**All drivers are required by law to notify the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) if they develop a medical condition that may affect their ability to drive safely.**

# The law and older drivers

As an older driver we need to be aware that:

- It is an offence to drive any vehicle if you cannot read a standard number plate in good daylight from 20.5m (67 feet) away.
- Drivers are legally obliged to renew their licence when they reach 70, and every three years after that. An information leaflet is available from the Post Office, which covers everything you need to know about renewing your licence.
- Using a mobile phone when driving is against the law.
- Drinking and driving is against the law.
- Driving whilst under the influence of drugs, even those prescribed by your doctor, is against the law.

Further information can be found in the latest edition of the 'Highway Code' and the Driving Standards Agency's 'The Driving Manual'.

**If you are planning to drink then leave the car at home, and remember, you may still be over the legal limit in the morning.**

# Free, older driver roadshows

North Yorkshire County Council, in partnership with the 95 Alive York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership, is running a number of older driver roadshows for drivers aged 50 and above.

The roadshows are aimed at people like us, who want to improve our skills so that we can carry on driving for many years; making driving a more enjoyable and stress free experience.

These events provide information on:

- Advice for older drivers
- Eyesight requirements
- Medication and driving
- The law and the older driver
- Driving skills
- Licensing requirements
- Road signs
- Winter driving
- Driving at night
- Driving alone
- Saving money



They are held by friendly staff in a relaxed and informal atmosphere.

Specific presentations throughout the day include:

- The older driver
- Winter driving
- Lone driver
- Smarter driving

Whether you want to visit our exhibition stands, attend one of the presentations, have a mini eye check or chat with our team, come along to a roadshow near you.

To find out when and where the roadshows are being held, visit the older drivers' section of [www.roadwise.co.uk](http://www.roadwise.co.uk) or call **08458 727374**.

**Come and chat with our team, pick up free giveaways and leave with top tips for safer, smarter driving.**



For information and advice visit  
**[www.roadwise.co.uk](http://www.roadwise.co.uk)**

