



Institute of Advanced Motorists

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Fact Sheet 03/001

THE OLDER DRIVER

There are many good "older" drivers but inevitably with time physiological and psychological changes can affect our ability to drive safely. The changes don't start at a specific age. They are gradual and there is no necessary correspondence between "biological age" and "age in years" but, for the population as a whole, from age 60 onwards, the risk of being involved in a blameworthy accident increases steadily.

Follow these simple IAM guidelines and your driving should be safe and less tiring.

- **Older cars have to undergo an "MoT" test. Older drivers should also have a regular check up with their doctor** to ensure that they are still fit to drive safely.
- **Your eyesight may not be as sharp as it used to be.** Deterioration can be quite slow and you may not realise that your vision isn't as good as it ought to be for safe driving. A regular check with a qualified optician is very important for older drivers. If you wear spectacles check that they are suitable for driving.
- **Arthritis or stiffness will restrict your movements** and your ability to make effective all round observations, and can also affect your vehicle handling skills. There are special accessories designed to meet the needs of older drivers. You may find that exercises advised by your doctor can also help.
- **Older drivers are often unaware of the effects that medicines (even non-prescription ones) can have on their concentration.** You should ask your doctor or pharmacist about the side effects of any medication.
- **Tiredness or stress affects your ability to concentrate.** Think carefully before deciding to make long journeys and plan to drive on routes that will minimise stress and fatigue. Take a twenty-minute break from driving every two hours, even if you don't feel tired. Some exercise and light refreshments during the break can help too.
- **Driving safely requires good awareness.** Observation errors and misinterpretation of information are common factors in accidents involving older drivers. Reaction times get slower with age. Be prepared to make adjustments when age related changes affect your safe driving performance.
- **Keep up to date with the changes in the Highway Code.** Ignorance of the law is no excuse.