

Gear up for safe driving: Mind • Body • Vehicle — It's all connected



Gear Up For Safe Driving: MIND • BODY • VEHICLE

Your **mind** will stay better focused on your driving if your **body** is properly fit to a clean, organized **vehicle** with a clear field of vision.

MIND

A clean, well-organized vehicle makes for a more tranquil environment where you can better focus on your driving. Just like in your home, if you don't maintain an organizational strategy in your car, things can quickly get out-of-hand.

SECURE THE CARGO

- Begin each trip by securing the most important cargo—yourself and your passengers. Always BUCKLE UP—It's the most important thing you can do to prevent injury in a crash.
- Think of everything in your vehicle as a potential projectile in the event of a crash and you'll see anything you choose to carry in a whole new light.
- Be sure to utilize all secured storage spaces, such as your glove box, front armrest and center console compartments; keep your dash clear.
- Utilize compartments such as seat-back and door pockets.
- Whenever possible, heavy items such as luggage, tools and even laptops should be stored in the trunk if you have one. Nets, straps and bungee cords should be used to secure large or heavy items in hatchbacks and SUVs.
- Try to avoid packing above the line of the seat backs. As well as obscuring the view, anything packed higher than this may fly forward in a crash or after sudden/emergency braking, potentially causing head injury.
- If you have young kids, choose soft books and toys when selecting things to keep them busy.
- The safest way to carry a pet for both its safety and yours is to have it secured in the appropriate pet restraint system.
- The back seat is the best place for pets. Similar to a young child, the front air bag system in a vehicle can be deadly to a dog during a crash, even if restrained.

CLEAR THE CLUTTER

- Each time you fill up with gas, use that time to toss the trash and clean out the cup holders.
- Make a habit of removing unnecessary items from the vehicle once per week. Choose a week day when you know you will have some extra time, and commit to clearing out unnecessary cargo upon parking at home.
- Lastly, make rules for family members who also ride in or drive the car that what comes in must also go out at the end of each trip.

Be sure that young passengers are secured in the right car seat or booster seat for their size and age. For information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) on the right type of child safety seat, visit: www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/CPS.

Another good reason to ensure every person is buckled:

The odds of a belt-restrained driver sustaining a fatal injury in a frontal collision are 137% higher when the passenger behind the driver is unbelted.¹

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BODY

GET THE RIGHT FIT TO YOUR VEHICLE

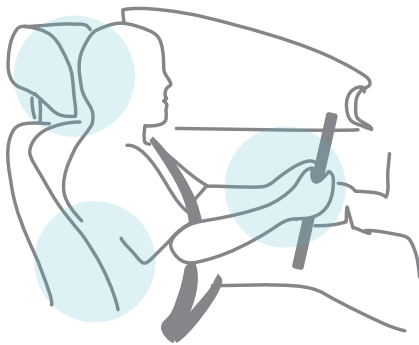
The right posture is key. The best angle for the back of your seat is 100°, just shy of straight. Place your hands in the 3 and 9 o'clock positions on the steering wheel and position your seat so there are 10 inches (25.4 cm) of space between the steering wheel and your chest. This should be close enough so that you're not leaning forward, but far enough to allow for safe airbag deployment;

Support your lower back. Adjust the seat's lumbar support to fill the space at your lower back. If driving a vehicle not equipped with lumbar support, a small pillow or rolled towel placed against the bottom part of your seat back will maintain the right shape for support;

Support your head. When properly adjusted, your vehicle's head restraint works in tandem with the seat belt and can help prevent neck, brain and spinal cord injuries in the event of a collision. Whether you are the driver or a passenger, follow these guidelines for a proper fit.

- Position the top of the head restraint so it is in a straight line with the top of your head.
- The center of your head restraint should be slightly above the top of your ear.
- The distance between the head restraint and the back of your head should be between 2-4 inches (5-10 cm).

Recheck your fit. If members of your family also drive your vehicle, be sure to share these tips with them so they are safely fitted to the vehicle and remember to recheck your fit each time you're behind the wheel.



Don't forget about your wipers

In addition to keeping your windshield clean inside and out, windshield wipers require regular maintenance.

- Consumer Reports found that with regular use, even top-rated wiper blades tend to degrade after 6-9 months and recommends replacement every 6-12 months².
- A good rule of thumb is if your wipers leave streaks or cannot clear the windshield in one swipe, they should be replaced.
- If you drive a sport utility vehicle, station wagon or minivan, don't forget to also evaluate and replace the rear windshield wiper at 6-12 months.

VEHICLE

MINIMIZE BLIND SPOTS TO HELP YOU SEE THE BIG PICTURE

While all blind spots cannot be eliminated, properly positioned mirrors are the key to maximizing your field of vision. To set your mirrors, with the vehicle safely parked, sit in the normal driving position and center the rearview mirror. Next, lean your head about 4" to the left and adjust the driver's side view mirrors until you can barely see the edge of the rear of your vehicle in the mirror. Do the same thing for the passenger side mirror by leaning 4" to the right. While

you won't see your vehicle in your side view mirrors when sitting in the normal driving position, this mirror adjustment will enable you to see more of the adjoining traffic lanes, as well as hazards next to the vehicle.* **Even with properly adjusted mirrors, you should always glance over your shoulder to check blind spots any time you turn, merge or change lanes.**

**There are various ways to set mirrors used even within the NETS membership and this is one way, but not necessarily the only way.*

¹ Bose et al, Increased risk of driver fatality due to unrestrained rear-seat passengers in severe frontal crashes, NIH, 2013

² Consumer Reports, 2009 <http://news.consumerreports.org/cars/2009/01/how-to-choose-t.html>