



How to drive safely in Scotland if you are an older person



#ArriveAlive
www.roadsafety.scot



**Safer
Scotland**
Scottish
Government

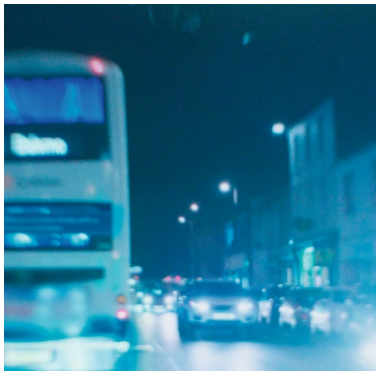
Who we are and what this booklet is about



Road Safety
SCOTLAND



We are **Road Safety Scotland**. We are part of the Scottish Government who are in charge of running the country.



We want everyone to be safe when they use the roads in Scotland.



It is important that you can drive safely whenever you get in your car.



This booklet is about how to keep on driving safely and why you might need to stop driving when you are older.

Changes that might happen to your driving



Some things can change how you drive when you are older, like

- changes to your eyesight
- slower **reactions**
- some medicines.

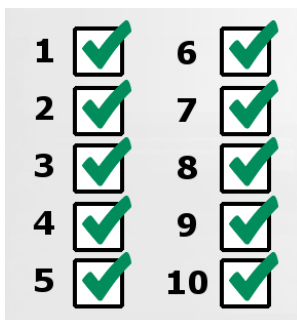


A **reaction** is how you act after something happens, like you see something in front of you so you press the brakes.



You might

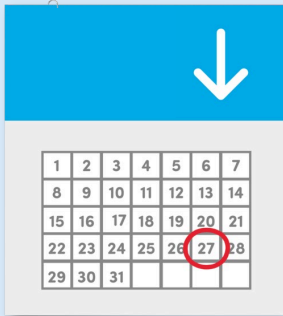
- drive less at night
- take shorter trips on quieter roads
- stop driving on the motorway
- use the car less in general.



You can read our **10 top tips** on the next pages to make sure you can keep driving safely as long as you can.

1

Get your eyes tested



Make sure you have an eye checkup often.



Changes to your sight can happen over a long time and you might not notice if your sight gets worse.



If you think your sight has got worse then talk to your **optician**. You do not have to wait until your next checkup.



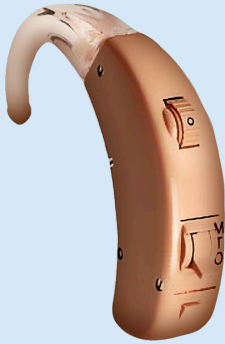
An **optician** is someone who looks after your eyes.



They can check for health problems that might change things like how well you can see at night.

2

Wear a hearing aid if you need to

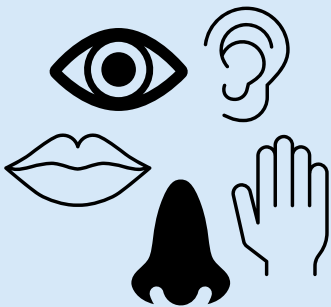


If you use a hearing aid at home then use it when you drive as well.



Confused

Any kind of **sensory loss** can make you feel confused and cut off from what is around you.



Sensory loss is when your sight, hearing, taste, touch or smell do not work normally.

3

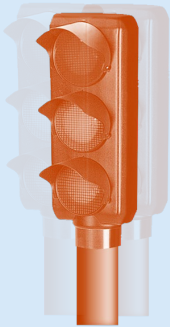
Be ready for driving at night



Make sure you have up-to-date distance glasses or contact lenses.



The lenses in your glasses should not be tinted with a colour especially red and amber.



They can make it hard for you to see traffic lights and car lights in front of you.



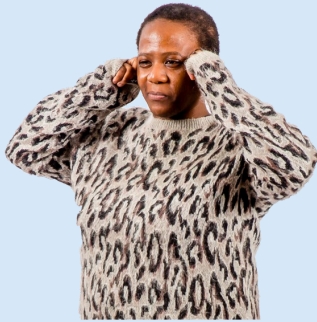
Check your headlights, brake lights and indicators work properly.



Keep your windscreen clean inside and outside your car.

4

Keep away from distractions



A **distraction** is something that makes it hard for you to think or notice other things.



Loud music and eating while driving are distractions.



Keep away from distractions especially when driving through busy junctions.



It is **illegal** to use a mobile phone when your driving and it can distract you even when you use your phone without your hands.



Illegal means that you are not allowed to do something and you might have to pay a fine or go to prison if you do it.

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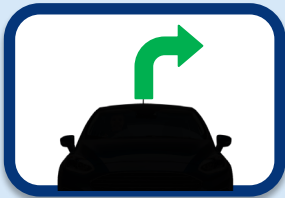
Plan your trip



Plan your trip before you set off.



It is more important to do this when you drive on roads you do not know well.



A satnav can be helpful on a long trip to a place you do not know.



Do not touch your satnav while driving.



Always take care at busy roundabouts, when you turn right and when you join moving traffic from a slip road.

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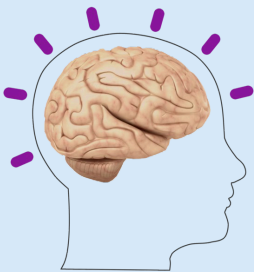
Get exercise often



Try to do exercise every day.



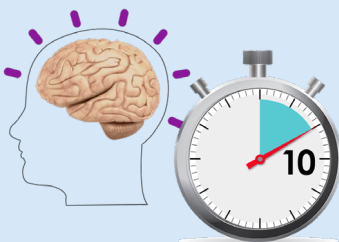
Exercise like walking, cycling and swimming can make you stronger. It can make movements better like when you turn the steering wheel and look over your shoulder.



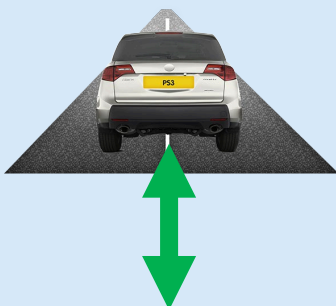
Exercise helps your brain work better and makes your reactions quicker.

7

Drive carefully



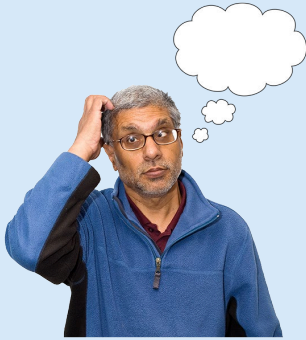
Reactions can slow down as you get older.



Drive slowly and leave more room between you and the car in front so you have enough time to stop.

8

Take a refresher course



Driving can be hard and there are a lot of things to remember.



A **refresher course** is a course you can do to find out about changes to the law and make your driving better.



You can do a refresher course at most driving schools. They might also do tests for older drivers.



You could also talk to someone at **IAM Roadsmart** or **Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents**, called RoSPA for short.

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Make adaptations if you need them



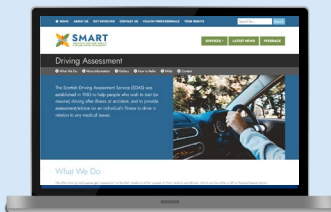
Adaptations mean changes to help you use your car.



You might need adaptations if you have problems like gripping the steering wheel or using other buttons and levers in your car.



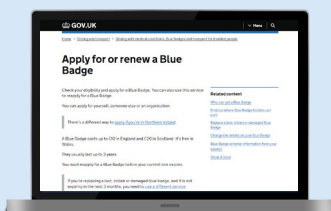
You can contact the **Scottish Driver Assessment Centre** for advice. They also run a free checkup called the **fitness to drive assessment**. Your doctor can ask for this for you.



[Click here to find out more about the fitness to drive assessment.](#)



You may be able to get a blue badge if you have a disability. This means you can park your car in more places and pay less money for parking.



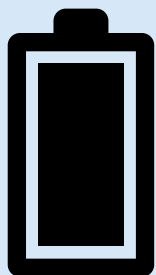
[Click here to find out more about blue badges.](#)

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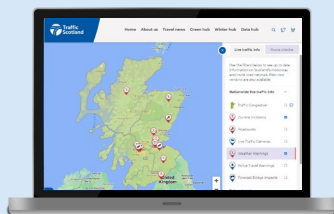
Be ready for driving in winter



Make a plan before you drive in winter weather.



Make sure your mobile phone has a full battery and keep checking the weather forecast.



You can plan any journey online at www.traffic.gov.scot

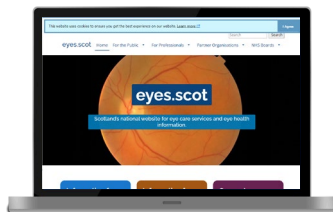
Save money on glasses and contact lenses



Some people can get a voucher for money off glasses and contact lenses.



To get the voucher you need to go for a free eye test with an optician.



[Click here to find out more about free eye tests.](#)

What if you take medicines and drive



Medicines can sometimes make you tired when driving. This includes painkillers, eye drops and cough medicines.



Driving problems can also happen when 2 medicines are in your body at the same time, even when 1 medicine on its own is ok to drive with.



Your driving might change if you stop taking a medicine that you usually take or take less than you used to. It is important to think about this too.



Ask your doctor or **pharmacist** to check if your medicine is safe for driving. A **pharmacist** is someone who gives you your medicine at a pharmacy.



If it is not safe then ask them for something else.



If you take medicine that could make you drive badly and then drive your car, you might have to



- pay a fine of £5000
- have your driving licence taken away
- go to prison.



Things you must tell the DVLA about

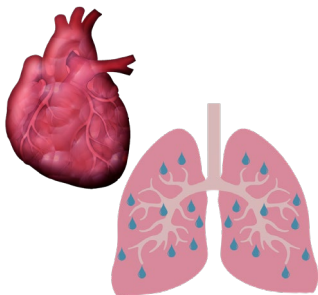


The **DVLA** is the organisation that makes rules for driving in the UK.



If you have a driving licence you must tell the DVLA

- if you start to have a **notifiable condition** or disability
- if a notifiable condition or disability has got worse since you got your driving licence.



Notifiable conditions are health conditions that might mean you don't drive safely, like heart problems, diabetes and epilepsy. We will say conditions in the rest of this booklet.



You could have to pay a fine of £1000 if you do not tell the DVLA about these conditions.



You could also be **prosecuted** if you have an accident even if it is not your fault.



Prosecuted means you go to court and a decision is made about your punishment.



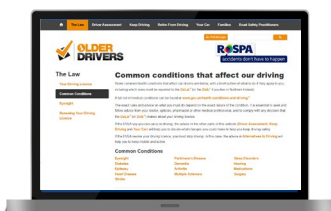
The rules about what you must do are different for each condition.



You must tell your doctor about the condition and do whatever the doctor and the DVLA tell you to do.



You could be prosecuted if you do not tell the DVLA about a condition that could change the way you drive.

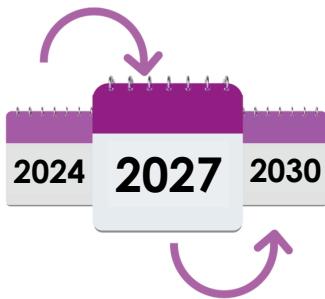


[Click here to find out more about notifiable conditions.](#)

What if your driving licence runs out



Driving licences in the UK run out when you are 70 years old but this does not mean that you have to stop driving.



You have to **renew** your driving licence every 3 years after you turn 70.



Renew means to make it last longer.

What if you have to stop driving



It is up to you to say if you are ok to drive.



You might have to stop driving so think about this before it happens to make it less stressful.

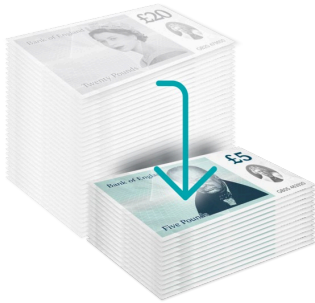


You might want to talk to someone about stopping driving if your reactions get slower and you feel stressed when driving.

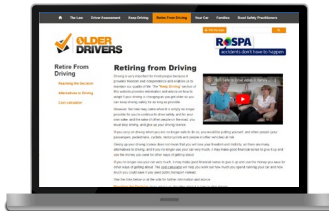


You must stop driving if you can't read a car number plate that is 20 metres away.

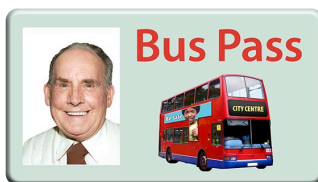
How to save money if you stop driving



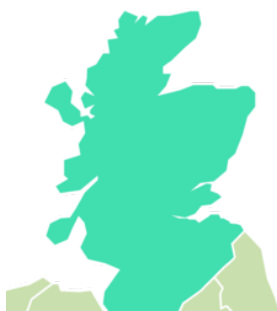
You could save money on the cost of running your car and also by selling it to someone else.



[Click here to work out how much you could save.](#)



You can get a bus pass which lets you travel for free. It's a great way to get around and also helps you get exercise.



You will also help to make the **environment** better in Scotland. **Environment** means the air, water and land around us.



The full version of this document is called
“A guide to road safety for older drivers”