

Driving Safely

It's your health — not your age — that matters most in driving safely. As you get older, you may notice physical changes that may affect driving such as changes in your strength, flexibility, and coordination.

As people age, their joints may get stiff and muscles may weaken. Some people have trouble walking or feel pain in their knees, legs, or ankles. They may not be able to turn their head easily, turn the steering wheel quickly, or brake safely. These problems can make it hard to drive safely.

Exercise can improve older drivers' strength and flexibility. In one study, 12 weeks of exercise improved older drivers' flexibility and coordination, and reduced driving errors.

Some exercises to try:

- Hand grip strengthening to help you hold on to the steering wheel
- Shoulder and upper arm flexibility exercises to make it easier to reach for your seat belt
- Neck and back flexibility exercises to help you turn to look behind you when backing out of a parking space or driveway
- Lower-body strength exercises to help with accelerating and braking

Here are some tips to help you drive safely:

- Talk with your doctor if you think pain, stiffness, or another health problem gets in the way of your driving.
- Always wear your seat belt.
- Stay off the cell phone.
- Make sure you can see and hear well enough to drive safely.
- Make sure your medications don't interfere with your driving.



Quick Tip

Make sure your car is a perfect fit. If possible, drive a car with power steering and power brakes, and check your side mirrors to eliminate any blind spots.

VISIT

www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life

- Try the sample exercises.
www.nhtsa.gov/Senior-Drivers
- Learn more about safe driving.

www.nihseniorhealth.gov

- Read more about how your health affects driving.

