



# **OLDER DRIVERS FORUM**



**Driving Safely, for Longer**

**For more information visit:**

**[www.olderdriversforum.com](http://www.olderdriversforum.com)**



## INTRODUCTION

The Older Drivers Forum are here with practical advice to help:

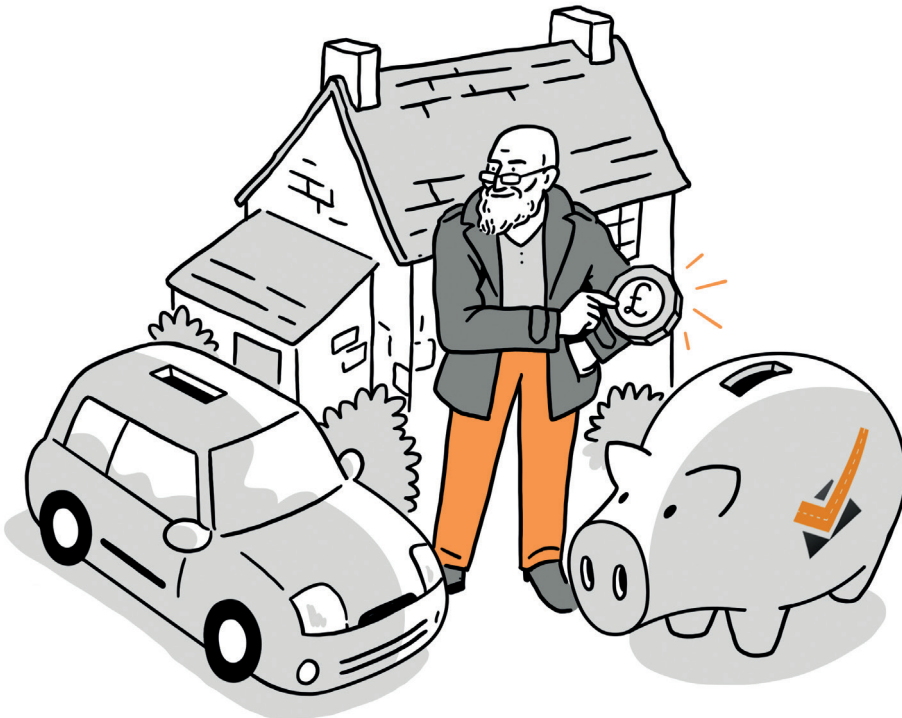
- ✓ Keep you driving safely for longer
- ✓ Plan an independent life without a car
- ✓ Families and carers concerned about a mature driver

**This booklet is a summary of our core advice.**

This includes details of mature driver assessments on page 6.

For more information and advice for mature drivers or concerned families and friends then visit our website:

**[www.olderdriversforum.com](http://www.olderdriversforum.com)**



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**Q: What is the Older Drivers Forum?**

**A: The Older Drivers Forum (ODF)** is the leading national organisation campaigning for mature driver safety. It was founded in 2013 by Rob Heard MBE, then roads safety lead for Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary.

The Older Drivers Forum is a not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers to support mature motorists on how to carry on driving safely for longer.

The Forum is passionate that none of us become complacent about our driving, but take steps to make sure we are all safe to drive, as long as we are fit to do so.

The Forum does not perform any legal function, and we do not have the authority to revoke driving licences.

We work nationally with Road Safety Organisations, Department for Transport and Government departments, constantly seeking the most effective means to support safe driving into older age.

**Q: How can I keep driving safely for longer?**

**A:** There are three main elements to any driving scenario which the driver can influence:

- Driving ability
- Vehicle preparedness and suitability
- Journey planning



## 1. DRIVING ABILITY

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### **Q: What should I be considering regarding driving ability?**

**A:** We know that older drivers have a wealth of experience, confidence and tolerance. However, sight, hearing, reaction time and judgement of speed and distance may not be as sharp as it once was.

We recommend that mature drivers:

- **Have annual eyesight and hearing tests.**  
90% of all information used to drive is visual. Good vision is crucial to see and react to hazards early
- **Keep up an exercise regime** to ensure mobility is sustained and to keep reactions up to speed
- **Check with a GP and optician** there are no medical conditions that impact fitness to drive and need to be reported to the DVLA and insurance company, or any medications being taken that affect driving ability
- **Keep driving regularly** to keep sharp
- **If a couple, then share the driving** so both maintain driving skills
- **Refresh their knowledge of the Highway Code**
- **Take an annual driver MOT** with a mature driver assessment for your needs

**Q: What type of driving assessment should I have?**

**A:** There are two types of assessments available depending on your needs:

1. Confidence building assessment is a good assessment if you have no medical condition which may affect your ability to drive and wish to refresh and brush up on your skills
2. Fitness to Drive assessment if you have a medical condition which may affect your ability to drive.

**Q: Where can I find an assessment, and what does it involve?****A: 1. Confidence building assessments**

These assessments are often run from your home or a place acceptable to you, and completed in your own car. To find such assessment near you visit:

[www.olderdriversforum.com/courses/](http://www.olderdriversforum.com/courses/)

**2. Fitness to Drive assessments**

These assessments should take place at a DVLA accredited Driving Mobility centre and are undertaken by a specially trained approved driving instructor and occupational therapist.

These assessments start with a cognitive skills interview. The driving assessment section uses dual control vehicles on various different roads. The assessment is designed to help and support you to carry on driving. The centre can give you advice on adaptations which may assist you. To find a Driving Mobility centre near you visit:

[www.drivingmobility.org.uk/find-a-centre/](http://www.drivingmobility.org.uk/find-a-centre/)

## 2. VEHICLE PREPAREDNESS AND SUITABILITY

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**Q: What should I consider regarding the preparedness and suitability of my vehicle?**

**A:** We recommend that mature drivers:

- **Ensure the vehicle is suitably maintained** if used infrequently. For example, tyre pressures should be checked every two weeks
- **Check that you have essential equipment** in case of breakdown or someone is taken ill. The *Whats3Words* app helps identify a location with three words. This is invaluable for the emergency services on rural roads with few obvious landmarks
- **Consider fitting driver aids** such as a panoramic rear-view mirror which helps eliminate blind spots
- **Drive the most modern car** that can be afforded to benefit from the latest safety features
- **Plan that there is comprehensive training on any new features** when taking ownership of a new car

Advice on used cars for mature drivers can be found at:  
[www.buyacar.co.uk/cars/used-cars/1823/best-cars-for-older-drivers](http://www.buyacar.co.uk/cars/used-cars/1823/best-cars-for-older-drivers)

### 3. JOURNEY PLANNING

#### **Q: What should I consider regarding journey planning?**

**A:** We recommend that mature drivers:

- **Check on [www.crashmap.co.uk](http://www.crashmap.co.uk)** to identify collision hot spots and consider alternative routes
- **Minimise driving on more demanding roads.** Use motorways or dual carriageways as much as possible as these are the safest classification of roads
- **Be prepared for the unexpected on rural roads.** Never drive faster than you can see and have time to react and come to a safe stop
- **Minimise routes where a right turn at a T junction is required.** This is a common setting for collisions involving mature drivers. The street view on online maps is helpful in identifying these
- **Avoid driving at rush hours.** These are statistically high risk times for crashes
- **Avoid driving in low sunlight and at night**, if distracted by sunlight or headlamp glare
- **Report potholes or any other road issues** *through your local council website*
- **Tell family or a friend if going on an unfamiliar journey**
- **Decide in advance a weather postponement plan.**  
In severe weather no journey is worth the risk

A guide to motorway services can be found at  
<https://wp.me/p3KeWX-X7>

## 4. PLANNING TO RETIRE FROM DRIVING

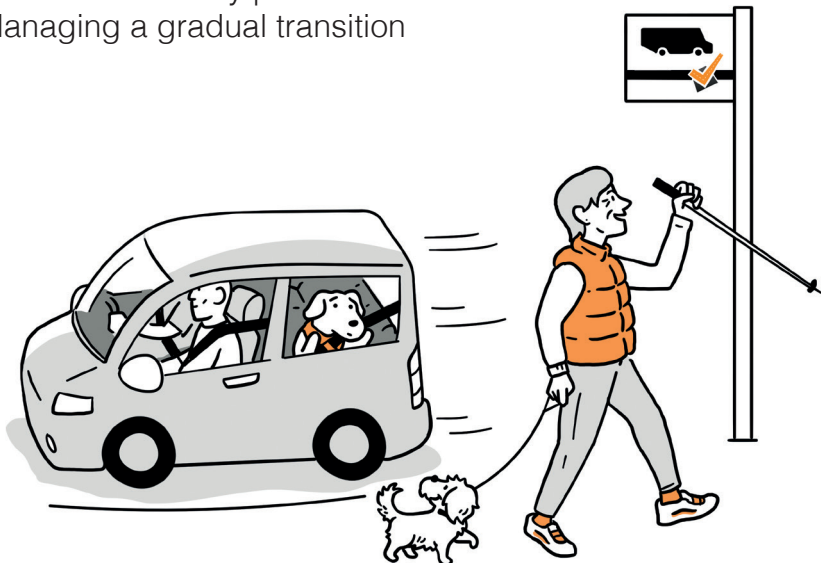
### **Q: When should I be thinking of retiring from driving?**

**A:** Most mature drivers are highly responsible and want to do their bit to keep the roads safe. In time you might find driving more stressful. Maybe you have a few scary moments on the roads. Maybe you notice that your passengers are less comfortable with you being at the wheel and you are no longer asked to be your grandchildren's taxi service. This starts to form a picture that it is time for change.

### **Q: How can I plan to maintain independence when I retire from driving?**

**A:** We recommend:

- Start planning as early as possible
- Checking if moving to a new home that there are alternative means of transport to maintain independence
- Making a list of regular journeys and developing an alternative mobility plan
- Managing a gradual transition





**Q: I am a relative/friend of an mature driver and am concerned about their fitness to drive. What should I do?**

**A:** This may not be as difficult as it may seem. Carefully choose the right person to lead the conversation; the time and place to start that conversation; and with prior research around alternative transport arrangements.

Focus on the positives:

- By giving up driving they might find they spend more time with family and get out and about more often
- They may experience an improvement in fitness as alternative means of transport lead to more physical exercise
- Once the sums are done, they may find getting rid of the car saves money

But not all mature drivers are so aware. This may be because they have undiagnosed dementia, or their dementia has moved to the next stage.

In that case families need to request professional intervention through the mature driver's GP or Optometrist. If the professional's advice is not heeded, they can report the matter can be reported direct to the DVLA.

Once the decision is made to stop driving, then the vehicle in question needs to be removed immediately. Having the car sitting on the drive or in the garage can be too much of a temptation.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please go to the Forum's website  
<https://www.olderdriversforum.com>

This has:

- **Lots of useful information**, including how to renew your licence and the law around medical conditions
- **A schedule of our popular zoom webinars**  
 To see previous recorded webinars on a range of subjects Visit:  
<https://olderdriversforum.com/webinars/>
- **There is also the facility on the website to ask questions**

Also follow us on:

- **Facebook**  
<https://www.facebook.com/olderdriversforum>
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