



## A Parents Guide To Home Driving Practice

Home driving practice can help a learner gain experience of different driving conditions faster than just having professional driving lessons, but it's not always easy to do. This guide can help you both stay safe, and make the most of your practice time.

### IT MIGHT TAKE A LITTLE WHILE

Learning to drive safely is a lot more than simply controlling the car – a new driver will need to have a good understanding of driving theory, the skill and coordination to operate the car's controls, whilst having the hazard awareness and ability to plan ahead by anticipating the actions of other road users. They will also need to cope with different weather and road conditions, all whilst navigating to their destination. Learning all these skills will clearly take some time, and since everyone learns at their own pace don't expect this process to just take a few lessons - it takes longer than most people realise.

### GETTING SET UP

Ensure that you are legally allowed to accompany a learner driver (you are over 21 years old, and have held a full driving licence for at least 3 years) and the car is insured for the learners use. Make sure you attach L-plates to the front and back of the car, and that it is safe and roadworthy. We recommend fitting an extra rear-view mirror inside the car so you can monitor following traffic. You can practice in any car, but smaller and less powerful cars are generally easier to control and manoeuvre. Make sure that your learner checks and adjusts their driving position and mirrors properly before moving off, and also that they understand how the car's wipers, lights and ventilation controls work so they can be used if needed. We recommend turning mobile phones and the car's radio off, so that you (and the learner) are not distracted and take your attention away from the road.

### PLANNING THE PRACTICE

Before you start your home driving practice, we would recommend the learner masters the basics with us in the driving school car first – as we have dual controls fitted to help keep us safe. We will advise when we think they are ready to practice at home. Plan your practice sessions carefully so that they have the correct difficulty level for your learner's ability. Start in a quiet area without much traffic or steep hills, and progress from there as their skill grows. Learn from mistakes and be patient and encouraging. If it seems to be going wrong, take a break or even stop the practice session. Other road users can be inconsiderate at times, but try to set a good example and remain calm. Ensure that you give directions to your learner clearly and in plenty of time. Look well ahead to anticipate problems, and if you need to, reach across to help steer the car or even use the handbrake when a dangerous situation develops.

### ATTITUDE

New drivers are much more likely to be involved in an accident. It is easy to become over-confident, and even if a learner thinks they are driving safely, their lack of experience can expose them to increased risk. You may need to point out the dangers you see ahead to help the learner drive safely, and even stop and discuss how you would handle the situation. You may find it frustrating when your learner is struggling with something you consider easy, but try to keep calm as a relaxed atmosphere provides the best learning conditions. If needed, leave the 'problem' and come back to it later.



## YOUR OWN DRIVING

When you are driving with the learner as a passenger, take a look at your own driving. If you have poor habits (e.g. poor mirror use, speeding, road rage etc.) then the learner won't take your coaching seriously if you don't drive in that manner yourself.

## DRIVING SKILLS CHECKLIST

To become a safe and independent driver, your learner will need to master all of the skills below:

- Moving away and stopping at the side of the road, including up and downhill gradients
- Correct use of mirrors and signals
- Dealing with junctions (including T-junctions, crossroads and roundabouts)
- Smooth steering control and good road positioning
- Anticipation of hazards and other road users actions
- Correct use of speed
- Manoeuvres (including the turn-in-the-road, left reverse, bay parking and parallel parking)
- Making emergency stops
- Dual carriageway driving
- Independent driving by following simple directions or road signs
- Driving at night or in poor weather conditions
- Town driving with busy streets and complicated junctions
- Country lanes

## EXTRA CAR KNOWLEDGE

The driving test now includes basic safety checks to help the learner keep their car safe on the road. We will run through these on driving lessons, but since our car will be slightly different, why not run through these at home as well. This will help them to understand their car, and establish the need for regular checks to keep their car running smoothly, including servicing requirements and MOT checks. You could even show them how to fill the car with fuel, and practice changing a wheel.

## ADDITIONAL HELP FROM US

Please feel free to speak to us if you have any questions about home driving practice. The techniques we have taught your learner to use when driving may be different to the way you drive, so if needed please discuss it with us – we will be happy to help.

## FURTHER SUPPORT

For more details about how to make the most of practise driving with a learner, please read DVSA's e-book ***Accompanying A Learner Driver*** - this is available on Amazon for Kindle, or in the iTunes store. If you would like to refresh your knowledge of the current recommended driving techniques, we would recommend reading ***The Official DVSA Guide to Driving*** – available in all good book shops.