

SAFETY PROGRAMS FOR SENIOR DRIVERS

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ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

Driving is an important component of independence, and we know you want to ensure you can get around safely. There are a number of age-related functional limitations that you should monitor and talk with your doctor about:

- **Motor Function.** Slower movement [1], difficulties with balance and gait [1], decreased strength [2], and physical impairments like knee flexion and foot abnormalities [3] can make driving more dangerous.
- **Cognitive Function.** Senior drivers face longer reaction times compared to younger drivers in all driving contexts [3]. Functional declines combined with longer reaction time can cause drivers to make decision errors resulting in crashes, injuries, and death [3, 4].
- **Medical Conditions and Medications.** Medical conditions and using multiple medications can negatively impact your driving [5]. In one large study, those that took Central Nervous System agents, hormones, or gastrointestinal medications showed riskier driving behaviors [6]. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about how your medications may impact your ability to drive.

This booklet contains programs, defensive driving courses, and resources you can use to brush up on your driving skills and learn about your car safety features. Within you will find basic information and links so you can determine if the materials are a good fit for you. All the featured programs can be publicly accessed through in-person sessions in Texas or remotely, which limits the types of programs featured. **If you have conditions that impact your driving, see if there is a Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist in your area who can help address specific concerns: https://myaota.aota.org/driver_search/.**

PROGRAMS

CarFit

AAA, AARP & American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)
[website](#)

Attend a CarFit checkup to have experts adjust your vehicle settings to fit you. They will use a 12-point checklist to make sure that things like your seat, mirrors, and steering wheel are positioned in a way that give you optimal visibility and control. You will also learn safety and mobility tips specific to your area. If you are not able to attend in-person, they have Virtual Workshops & Focus Sessions and an On-demand CarFit Workshop. CarFit events are free of charge.

Smart DriverTEK

AARP & The Hartford
[website](#)

Smart DriverTEK offers in-person, virtual (live), and self-paced online workshops that teach you all about safety features in cars. After one of their free, 90-minute workshops you'll be prepared to use in-vehicle technology to make driving safer and easier.



Interventions that target specific skills that decline with age or combine multiple types of interventions are most effective at reducing crashes [7].

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

The following defensive driving courses are all specifically created for senior drivers. Completion of a course may allow you to receive car insurance discounts. You must check with your insurance carrier to ensure you are eligible for a defensive driving insurance discount.



Mature Defensive Driving Course

National Safety Council
[website](#)

This course provides sessions on the following six topics:

- It's All About Choices: personal driving profile, driving attitudes and behaviors
- Ready for the Road: defensive driving techniques, vehicle maintenance and occupant protection
- Don't Add Insult to Injury: impaired, distracted, fatigued and aggressive driving, and managing your emotions
- Success on the Road: unsafe driving behaviors, practice hazard recognition, driving scenarios and safe driving techniques
- Collision Prevention: steps to preventing collisions and identify road sign shapes
- Drive for Life: defensive driving habits and personal accountability for your driving behaviors and decisions

The course cost ranges from \$12.50 - \$50, depending on your insurance carrier. Most carriers only offer the 4-hour online course online however, some insurances offer in-person classroom sessions.

RoadWise™ Driver

AAA

website

This course helps equip you to adjust to new age-related driving challenges and includes information about in-vehicle technology.

"The course covers topics like:

- Extending Your Safe Driving Career
- Distractions, Drowsiness, Aggressive Driving & Road Rage
- Managing Visibility, Time & Space
- Alcohol & Medications
- Comfort & Safety Tips" [8].

In Texas, this is offered as a self-paced, 8-hour online course for about \$20.

Smart Driver

AARP

website

This 4-hour online course covers the following topics:

- "Research-based safe driving strategies.
- Information on the effects of medication on driving.
- Preventive measures to reduce driver distractions.
- Proper use of safety belts, air bags, anti-lock brakes, and new technology found in cars today.
- Techniques for handling left turns, right-of-way, and roundabouts.
- State-specific rules and regulations in 19 key areas, including construction zones, child safety seats, school buses, cellphone use and more." [9].

At the time of publishing, this course is only available online for a fee (around \$30). The course can be completed at your own pace within 60 days of registration.

Defensive Driving Course Comparison

Course Name	Length	Cost Estimate
Mature Defensive Driving Course	4 hours	\$12.50 - \$50, depending on your insurance carrier
RoadWise™ Driver	8 hours	\$20
Smart Driver	4 hours	\$30

Other Considerations

- **See if you can find individualized, on-road training.** Training tailored to individual participants improved both self-perceived and driving outcomes [10]. Older drivers who received individualized on-road training had a higher reduction in total unsafe actions than older drivers who only received a group educational session [11].
- **Think about taking a course sooner rather than later.** Norway has a voluntary defensive driving course for those over the age of 65. Those that participated in the course before 75 years of age were less likely to be the cause of a multi-vehicle crash compared to those who did not take the course or those that took the course when they were 75 years or older. [12]

RESOURCES

Virginia GrandDriver

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
[website](#)

The Virginia GrandDriver website contains activities and educational resources for senior drivers, caregivers, and professionals. Visit the site for an extensive resource library and at-home workout videos that aim to improve coordination, flexibility, and strength!

Older Drivers Guide, Clearinghouse for Older Road User Safety

Roadway Safety Foundation
[website](#)

The Older Drivers Guide contains the following content:

- Planning for Road Safety
- Knowing the Signs - Am I Safe on the Road?
- Screening and Assessment Tools
- Medical Conditions and Safe Road Use
- Vehicle Safety Features
- My State Resources

The Clearinghouse for Older Road User Safety (ChORUS) website contains many additional resources for you and your family members, including a searchable library of resources and helpful national and state-specific information and website links.

Driving Safely While Aging Gracefully

National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA)
website

The NHTSA Older Drivers webpage offers a variety of information for seniors and caregivers, including the Driving Safely While Aging Gracefully guide with self-assessment, resources and videos about driving with particular medical conditions and a resource library.

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resources and the electronic
version of this booklet.



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