

Tips to Safely Extend Your Driving Career

By: *John Paul*, Senior Manager at AAA – Driver Safety Advocacy

- ✓ Have your vision (and your eyeglasses) checked regularly.
- ✓ Keep your eyeglasses and your vehicle's windshield clean!
- ✓ When driving, make sure you're looking up and straight ahead. As we get older, we tend to look down and focus primarily on the car and road directly in front of us. It's better to look straight ahead and see what's happening beyond the taillights of the car in front of you.
- ✓ Remember you were taught to "place your hands on the steering wheel at 10 and 2 o'clock?" It's known to be safer to place them at either "9 and 3 o'clock" or "4 and 8 o'clock." This enables the driver's airbag to safely inflate in an accident, it provides better control, and it's less tiring.
- ✓ Pay attention! Always be scanning for people, items in the road, and other vehicles or bikes.
- ✓ Leave plenty of room between your car and the car ahead of you. Rule of thumb: leave 3 seconds of following distance. To do this, notice when the car in front of you passes a sign (or something on the side of the road) and then count for 3 seconds (remember...? one one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand). Eventually you'll *know* how long 3 seconds is and be able to judge distance without counting. *REGARDLESS of the speed you're traveling*, keep 3 seconds between you and the car in front of you. Add an extra second for inclement weather or dark roadways.
- ✓ When your eyes aren't looking forward, hover your right foot over the brake pedal. Do NOT "ride" the brake, just hover your foot over it. This way you'll be ready in case you need to stop quickly.
- ✓ When you're at a set of lights or a stop sign, look across at the car opposite you. Notice if their wheels are turned. Their directional may or may not be flashing, but the direction their wheels are facing will give you additional information regarding which direction they plan to go.
- ✓ When you're stopped at an intersection, hesitate before you proceed forward. Take a breath. Go when you're certain that the intersection is clear.
- ✓ Avoid taking left turns whenever possible. It's a fact that more car crashes occur from left hand turns than any others.
- ✓ Do not drive under the influence of alcohol, prescription drugs, or marijuana. Even over-the-counter drugs like antihistamines can cause you to feel tired. *Feel different? Drive different!*

*If you follow these safety tips, you may be able to extend your driving career.
Be safe out there!*