

Keeping YOU properly fueled, well-oiled and energized



Gear Up For Safe Driving: MIND • BODY • VEHICLE

Just as important as keeping your vehicle well maintained, you need to **keep your body fueled, well-oiled and energized** so you're ready to handle the challenges of safe driving.

DID YOU KNOW?

- There are periods of the day when we are most likely to feel sleepy — mid-afternoon from 2PM to 5PM and from midnight to 6AM¹
- Choosing to snack strategically can help sustain energy and avoid sudden “crashes”, although it is not a substitute for getting the 7.5–8 hours of recommended sleep each night.
- One in seven non-exercisers (14%) reports having trouble staying awake while driving, eating or engaging in social activity, almost three times the rate of those who exercise.²
- If you are inactive, adding a 10 minute walk every day could improve your likelihood of a good night's sleep.³

Keep your body clock top of mind when setting a schedule that involves driving

- Be cautious of setting a schedule with early morning or mid-afternoon meetings that can put you on the road during the times when you are likely to feel drowsy.
- Avoid scheduling meetings that will require travel late into the night.
- When booking flight travel, especially if you will be crossing time zones, plan ahead and consider the options for the final leg of your journey—the drive from the airport to home.
- Consider using a cab or car service, having a friend or family member drop you off and pick you up from the airport, or stay the night near the airport and drive home or to the office in the morning.



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FUEL UP

Glucose provides the body with its primary source of energy. The glycemic index is a measurement of foods based on how quickly they raise blood glucose levels. Foods with a low-glycemic index will help keep your blood glucose steady giving you the energy you need for optimum brain performance. Foods with a high-glycemic index will often provide a quick energy boost shortly followed by a drop in energy, leaving you more sluggish than you were to begin with. Snacking strategically during the “afternoon slump” can be an effective way to maintain your energy and to support peak performance both on-and-off the road.



Reaction time shortens from infancy into the late 20s. Then it slowly increases through the 50s and 60s. Reaction time lengthens at a more rapid pace as a person gets into their 70s.⁴

GET ENERGIZED

Recharge with exercise. Before you hit the road, get moving for 10 minutes by going for a brisk walk or taking the stairs to give yourself a natural boost of energy.*

Park in the outer limits. Another good way to get your body moving prior to getting behind the wheel is (if physically able) to keep your vehicle parked in the back of the parking lot.

Get the most out of your rest break. Safety experts recommend taking a break when driving every 2 hours or 100 miles.

- If you pull over for coffee, be sure to also rest for about 20 minutes while you wait for the caffeine to take effect. The intensity of its effect will depend on your body’s particular reaction to caffeine and the dosage.
- An alternative to caffeine is to pull over at a rest area and walk briskly for 10 minutes. A study concluded a brisk 10-minute walk increased energy for two hours.⁵
- Taking 10 minutes to stretch at a rest stop is also a good option. Focus on your neck, feet (particularly your driving foot), lower back and torso.
- Make smart snack choices. Choose nuts or an apple and a bottle of water over sugary treats and drinks.
- Sometimes just changing activities can re-energize you. While pulled over, take the opportunity to check messages and return calls and e-mails. This will remove these distractions from your mind and allow you to better focus on the drive once you’re back on the road.

**Be sure to consult your physician before starting any new exercise program.*

STAY WELLOILED

Regardless of your age, initiating a regular stretching routine is a good idea. Driving is a physical task that requires flexibility and limbering up helps your entire body to move more freely, allowing you to observe the road from all angles. This can help you spot potential hazards on the road and

fatigue, helping to improve reaction time and allowing you to be better focused.

According to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, flexibility helps with the following activities related to driving:

assist with critical driving maneuvers such as hard braking and quick steering. Staying loose will also increase comfort on long drives, and can help ward off

- ✓ Braking
- ✓ Getting in and out of the car
- ✓ Looking to the side and rear
- ✓ Steering
- ✓ Parking the car
- ✓ Adjusting seat belts
- ✓ Sitting for long periods of time

1 NHTSA’s Wake Up and Get Some Sleep Campaign
 2 National Sleep Foundation’s (NSF) 2013 Sleep in America® poll
 3 Hirshkowitz, Max PhD, National Sleep Foundation poll task force chair, 2013

4 Kosinski, Robert J., A Literature Review on Reaction Time, Clemson University, 2012
 5 Thayer, Robert PhD, The Origin of Everyday Moods: Managing Energy, Tension, and Stress, 1996