

Best Practice Guide

Acceleration



Get Off To A Safe Start

Accelerating is something that all drivers do but many are oblivious to the way in which they do it. In fact many probably fail to realise that there is a good deal of skill involved in safe acceleration.

The first thing to learn is the three A's: AVOID AGGRESSIVE ACCELERATION!

Next you should learn the three S's: SLOWLY, SMOOTHLY and STEADILY!

Get the basics of accelerating right and your journeys should be much more comfortable.

Don't Force Your Car To Guzzle

Accelerating is the 'thirstiest' work you can ask your vehicle to do. Fast, hard acceleration uses a lot of fuel. It also wears out your tyres and engine much quicker. Accelerate gradually and smoothly and avoid speeding up and slowing down unnecessarily.

Avoid Tailgating

Leave a following distance of at least two seconds from the vehicle in front to avoid having to slam your brakes on unnecessarily and re-accelerate frequently. It is much better to maintain a steady speed whenever possible and leaving a safe gap between other vehicles makes it easier to do this.



Don't Jack-Rabbit

Aggressive driving - such as 'jackrabbit' starts from traffic lights - increases fuel consumption by up to 37%. The most fuel-efficient way of driving is to accelerate smoothly and maintain a steady speed.

Go Gentle On Corners

Corners require skill, especially when it comes to acceleration. Avoid accelerating as you are turning as this can lead to loss of control.

When taking a corner:

- Slow down gradually on the approach.
- Maintain a steady (safe) speed as you turn.
- Accelerate gently as you start to leave the corner.

Avoid Skidding

Too much acceleration can lead to skidding and loss of control. The best way to avoid skidding is to stick to a safe speed and accelerate gradually and slowly. The same goes for when you are slowing down - braking and decelerating should be done smoothly.

Go Green

By remembering the three S's of accelerating you will not only be much safer on the road but you will also reduce your impact on the environment. Aggressive acceleration uses more fuel and therefore causes your car to emit more fumes. Watching your speed - in particular your acceleration - can help reduce your vehicle's emissions.



Consider Your Pocket

Accelerating slowly, smoothly and steadily can help to save you money as the less you accelerate the less fuel you use. Accelerating gradually and avoiding harsh braking will also reduce engine wear and prolong the life of your brakes, resulting in less repair bills!

Be Comfortable

Harsh acceleration and harsh braking = uncomfortable journeys. Why make your driving experience less enjoyable by driving aggressively? Remember the three S's to make your journey more enjoyable, and less stressful.



Don't Categorize Yourself

Drivers who accelerate harshly are often the same drivers who will also brake suddenly and exceed the speed limit. Don't categorize yourself as a dangerous driver by adopting any of these tendencies.

If you think you may be seen as an aggressive driver by others you should address your behaviour as a priority.

- A** Avoid skidding.
- C** Corner carefully.
- C** Consider your pocket.
- E** Enjoy your journey by avoiding harsh acceleration.
- L** Loss of control can be caused by too much acceleration.
- E** Environmental benefits occur from going gentle on the gas.
- R** Remember the three S's.
- A** Avoid jack-rabbit starts.
- T** Tailgating can lead to harsh acceleration.
- E** Exceeding the speed limit must be avoided.

WARNING

Some drivers think that aggressive accelerating and hard braking will speed up a journey significantly. But a European study found that this type of driving reduces travel time by only 4% - this is the equivalent of 2.5 minutes in a 60 minute trip, or just over 1 minute in a 30 minute trip.