

What to expect during your driving lessons. (Starter Pack)

Here are some of the items that will be covered during your forthcoming lessons.

Cockpit Drill

1. Ensure all Doors are properly closed.
2. Ensure the Handbrake is in the ON position.
3. Ensure the Gear stick is in Neutral.
4. Adjust the driving Seat to the correct position.
5. Adjust your Mirrors to the correct position.
6. Put on your Seat belt.

Driving Position

Before you can work the controls properly, you must ensure that you are able to reach them easily and comfortably.

You should be able to push the brake pedal down without moving your body forward.

You should be able to press the clutch pedal fully down without stretching your leg.

At the same time, you should be able to hold the steering wheel lightly, but firmly with both hands.

Starting the engine.

1. Check to see that the Handbrake is on.
 2. Ensure the Gear lever is in the Neutral position (a lot of side to side movement).
 3. Switch on the Ignition.
 4. Release key as soon as the engine starts.
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The Three Main Areas of Control

Accelerator

Your right foot works the accelerator. The accelerator controls the power output of the engine. The further the pedal is pressed down, the greater the power output and the faster the car will go. As you let the pedal up, the opposite happens and the car begins to slow down. This is because the engine is trying to run more slowly and is acting as a brake.

Brake

The brake pedal, like the accelerator is worked by the right foot, as you don't need to use these two controls at the same time. The brake pedal is placed immediately to the left of the accelerator and should be worked with the ball of the right foot. The harder the pedal is pushed down the greater the braking effect and the more quickly the car will lose speed. In most situations only light pressure is needed to brake smoothly and safely. Practice moving your foot from accelerator to brake while the car is stationary.

Clutch

The clutch is a device, which allows the engine to run without driving the wheels. Simply put, it is made up of two plates. One of them connected to the engine turns all the time while the engine is running; the other is connected to the wheels and is moved only when it is touching the first one.

When the clutch pedal is in the normal "up" position, the plates are held firmly together by spring pressure so that the engine will drive the car. Pushing the pedal down separates the plates and breaks the link between the engine and the wheels. To get the car to move off slowly the gap between these two plates has to be closed but not too suddenly. This means letting the clutch up until it

reaches the point at which the two plates come together. This point is called the **biting point** and with practice and experience you will come to know just where it is. You will be able to feel it and also hear it because the speed of the engine will drop. Being able to sense this point is part of the secret of clutch control. The other part is being able to control the rest of the upward movement of the clutch pedal so that the two plates fit together smoothly. This needs a lot of practice.

Other Controls

Gear stick

The gear stick is used to change from one gear to another. The gears contained in a gearbox enable the driver to match the engine power to the speed of the car and the load it has to move.

Handbrake

The function of the handbrake is to hold the vehicle still while it is stopped or parked.

The handbrake usually operates only on the two rear wheels. The handbrake is fitted with a catch to fit it in the lock position. To apply the handbrake, release the catch by pressing the button at the end of the handbrake. Pull it up then release the button. The catch will now lock the handbrake in the on position. To release the handbrake, first pull it up as if to apply it harder (this will release the catch more easily) then still pressing the button the handbrake can be moved to the off position.

Steering

You should keep a light but firm grip on the steering wheel (thumbs on the inside rim). Keep both hands on the steering wheel when not using the indicator, gear stick etc. Your hands should not cross when turning the wheel. The correct way to steer round a corner is to feed the rim of the steering wheel through your hands with a pull – push movement. If you are turning left the left hand should be moved to a high position (but not past twelve o'clock) and then the wheel pulled downwards, while the right hand grips the wheel at the three o'clock position and pushes the wheel upwards towards the twelve o'clock position. Reverse the movements for turning right. When less steering is needed hand movements may be shorter. As the turn is completed you must straighten up. The wheel should not be allowed to spin through your hands.

Indicators

Indicators are used to warn other road users of your intention to perform a particular maneuver (changing lanes or turning). Remember Indicators are only Indicators and do not give you Right of way under any circumstances.

Mirrors

Many, if not all vehicles have three mirrors:

One interior and two exterior.

The interior mirror should be adjusted so that four corners of the back window can be seen.

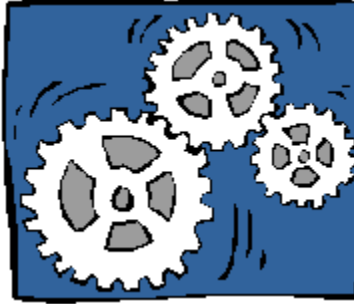
The purpose of the mirrors is to give you a clear view of the road behind and enable you to keep up to date with what is happening behind you. More importantly it will help you make sensible decisions based on the position and speed of traffic behind you. The mirror must be checked regularly along the way and certainly before any type of maneuver is attempted.

REMEMBER: Don't just look in your mirrors; act safely and sensibly on what you see.

Blindspots

A blind spot is an area behind you that your mirrors will not cover. Their importance will be demonstrated during your lesson. In every case blind spots should be checked before moving off or undertaking any maneuver.





Changing up the gears

1. Left hand on the gear lever.
2. Press Clutch pedal right down to the floor with the left foot and at the same time release the pressure from the accelerator pedal.
3. Move the gear lever to the next highest position.
4. Let the clutch pedal come up smoothly and squeeze the accelerator gradually. At the same time, put your left hand back on the wheel.

A GUIDELINE AS TO WHEN TO CHANGE GEARS (APPROX)

0-10 mph	1st Gear	10-20mph	2nd Gear
20-30mph	3rd Gear	30mph and over	4th Gear

Changing down the gears

When changing down the gears you must match engine speed to correct gear. This means you use the **B.B.C.** method which stands for **B**rake, **B**efore, **C**lutch.

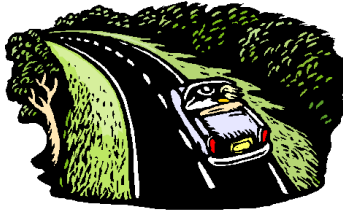


Steering

- Your hands should be positioned between the ten to two, a quarter past three positions.
- You must keep the car moving parallel to the kerb and fairly close to it, about three feet away.
- Look well ahead, fixing on a point 30-40 yards away and avoid jerky movements of the wheel.
- Concentrate on holding the wheel steady in your right hand when you are changing gear, otherwise you will tend to wander.



Mirrors and Blindspots



Moving off from a stopped position

1. Press the clutch pedal all the way down with your left foot and hold it there.
2. Move gear level into first gear and set the engine power.
3. Release clutch slowly until you feel a noticeable "tug" on your clutch. With experience you will be able to find the biting point easily.
4. Hold the clutch pedal quite still in this position.
5. Make final safety checks:
 - A: Check Mirrors
 - B: Glance over right shoulder (blind spot)
6. Give your signal (Indicate) showing you are intending to move off.
7. Let the clutch pedal come up a little more- still slowly and smoothly. At the same time, release the handbrake, remembering to put your hand back on the steering wheel straight away. The car will begin to move.
8. Press the accelerator further down - gradually - to speed the car up. At the same time let the clutch pedal come right up - still smoothly - and then take your left foot off it completely.

Stopping



Having decided to stop you will:

1. Use the mirrors
2. Signal your intention to stop by giving a left signal (**M.S.M=Mirror Signal Mirror**)
3. Take your right foot off the accelerator (the engine will slow down and this will help slow the car)
4. Move your right foot onto the brake pedal and press it down gently at first then gradually harder.
5. Just before the car stops, press your left foot all the way down on the clutch (this disengages the engine from the wheels and stops the engine from stalling) Don't do this too soon or you will lose the help of engine braking.
6. Ease the pressure on the brake pedal as the car stops (unless on a slope)
7. Apply the handbrake
8. Put the gear lever into neutral
9. Cancel indicator and remove feet from pedals.



Many more topics and areas of driving are covered during the actual instruction and the above is just to get you started and familiar with basic procedures before you step into the car.

Safe Driving from Ciarán and Andrew from A & C Driving School.