8 ways to avoid distracted driving.



Right now, at this very moment, there are approximately 660,000 drivers using their smartphones on the road.

They're texting. Talking. Typing. And tuning.

But mostly… they're distracted.

What is distracted driving?

Have you ever arrived at your destination and couldn't remember how you got there? Or how you got there so fast?

Have you ever missed a turn or an exit on one of your regular routes?

Have you ever had to quickly slam on the brakes, because something was suddenly in front of you?

If so, you've probably been guilty of distracted driving, which is anything that takes your eyes off the road, hands off the wheel or mind off the drive.

Who's driving distracted?

Not surprisingly, the most inexperienced drivers are the most frequent offenders. In fact, 16 percent of all distracted driving crashes involve drivers who are under the age of 20. Additionally, 10 percent of drivers between the ages of 15 and 19 who were involved in fatal crashes were reportedly distracted.

Drivers in their 20s? They're distracted, too. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety

Administration, they make up 27 percent of the distracted drivers and 38 percent of the distracted drivers who were using phones in fatal crashes.

But, they're not the only ones. Ultimately, people of all ages are driving distracted (even parents with kids in the car).

How can I be a better driver?

The rules of the road are there for a reason. When you're fully attentive, it will be easier to follow them, and it will also reduce your risk of an accident.

To avoid driving distracted, try to:

1. **Familiarize yourself with your car's features.** Try this quick exercise. Sit in your parked car, close your eyes, and see how well you know your way around. Can you find your windshield wipers? Cruise control? Turn signal? The goal here is to access everything you need without taking your eyes off the road. And if you know exactly where they are, that'll be much easier.
2. **Know where you're navigating.** Before you start your car, start your GPS. If you have a passenger, ask them to be your co-pilot. If you don't, be sure your navigation system is set to speak to you.
3. **Pick the perfect playlist.** Instead of cycling through station after station, curate a custom playlist before you get in the car, and count on that to take you through your trip.
4. **Stick your smartphone in the center console.** Did you know drivers are four times more likely to get into an accident if they're using their phone? That's why it makes sense to keep it out of sight and out of mind. Whether you choose to keep your smartphone in your center console, glove box, purse or backseat, try to keep it somewhere you can't easily access it.
5. **Silence your notifications.** Take away the temptation. Either turn off your phone or turn off the sound.
6. **Sip through a straw.** Eating while driving? The answer should be easy. But sometimes, you do need a drink, especially during long road trips. The problem is, when you tip a cup or bottle back, you tip your head back, too. And then, you can no longer see where you're going. The best way around it? Just use a straw.
7. **Download an app designed to reduce distraction.** Believe it or not, there are smartphone apps that can keep you on your best behavior by blocking texts and calls. Some even restrict your access to other smartphone features, like your email and your camera.
8. **Make a promise and take a pledge.** If you're committed to being a more attentive driver, there are quite a few organizations that will honor your pledge to do so. We recommend pledging to the National Safety Council or becoming part of AT&T's "It Can Wait" campaign.

Riding, not driving? Here's how you can be a better passenger, too.