



Driving Test Nerves

Calm behind the Wheel

Driving Success



If you are affected by driving test nerves then the first thing to remember is that you are not alone. Driving test nerves affect the majority of learner drivers, the overwhelming majority of whom will eventually go on to pass their driving test.

The second point to remember is that you shouldn't be taking your practical driving test unless your Instructor thinks you are capable of passing. The expert thinks you're ready. The expert thinks you're capable. Already you have a vote of confidence from someone who matters.

Why do you feel nervous? What consequences do you fear? Is it for your safety on the road? If it is then don't worry, you're in a dual controlled car with a professional Driving Test Examiner. They know how to deal with you and any mistakes you may make.

Maybe your nerves stem from the fear that if you fail your test you'll let your friends and family down. If so then sod them. Don't tell them.

In some people exams of any sort can cause nerves and anxiety to rise. If this is you then put your driving test in context. It's a lot easier to retake a driving test than it is your GCSE's or A-Levels. The main loss of a failed driving test is financial, several more lessons and the cost of a second test.

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DRIVING TEST PREPARATION

1. Ensure that you know exactly what to expect on the driving test. Getting into a situation where you may not know entirely what's going to happen will increase stress levels and nerves.

Also, ask your driving instructor for a mock driving test. This will give you a good idea if you are at test standard, but also increase your understanding of what the examiner will ask you on the day of your test.

Your driving instructor will hopefully provide you with lots of tips for passing the driving test. You will also need to be familiar with the Show Me Tell Me questions and answers. Your instructor will go over these with you as some of them are specific to your car only.

2. A learner driver may be an excellent driver with good control, safety and awareness. The most significant disadvantage for a learner taking the driving test however is lack of experience. An example could be another road user; car, cyclist or pedestrian doing something that you have not experienced during your driving lessons. Unless a learner takes thousands of driving lessons, then it's unlikely a learner is going to encounter every situation. Certain areas of the driving test can be predominantly controlled by the learner, such as the manoeuvres. The 4 test manoeuvres are as follows:

Pull up on the right hand side of road

Forward Bay Park

Parallel parking

Bay parking

We can also put the emergency stop in here as this can be controlled by the learner as a manoeuvre is. When it comes to manoeuvres, the learner has complete control of the car and the situation. If other road users have stopped and are waiting for you to finish, continue slowly and safely and let them wait. If they get impatient, let them, it's your driving test. If they try to get round you, stop and let them get on with it.

If they harass you and are in your way, safely and slowly get out of their way and if necessary start again. Essentially, practice manoeuvres until you are absolutely confident with them and your ability as there should be no reason to fail on this aspect of the driving test.

3. The independent part of the driving test can often make learners nervous and on some occasions panic. The whole point of the independent driving is to establish that this is the one thing you don't do. Who-ever you are learning to drive with, ensure that you have plenty of practice simply driving around following destinations off road signs. As in life you are likely to take a wrong turn and this may happen in your driving test. The examiner doesn't care if you do and will not impact the result of your test. Ensure you are capable of remaining calm and safe with plenty of practice

4. Being familiar with the driving test routes will without question benefit you. Every good driving instructor should know the routes for particular test centres. It isn't important to know every single road on the routes as many of the roads are much the same.

There are however often difficult areas on test routes implemented by the examiner intentionally to test your ability to the max. Ensuring that you are confident with these areas will go a long way into reducing test nerves. Familiarisation with the roads in and out of the test centre is also important.



5. If you are a learner that is taking 1 driving lesson per week, increase your driving lessons 2 to 3 weeks before your test and take them at various times of the day including busy times. The more time you spend driving, the more normal it becomes. Taking lessons at different times will allow you to gain more experience with increased traffic flow.

6. Many learner drivers don't tell anyone that they have a driving test, or the least amount of people as possible. The more people that know you have a test, the more pressure it will put on you to pass.

7. Choosing a good time of day to book your test can reduce driving test nerves. During the winter months, driving tests can often get cancelled due to snow, ice or fog. If booking during winter months, try as late as possible in the day, but before rush hour starts. Around 2 or 3pm is good. As it is later in the day, it will give time for snow or ice to thaw and is less likely to be cancelled. This time of day will by-pass the frantic drivers at rush hour. Outside of winter months, again avoid rush hour if possible. Between the hours of 10am and 3pm is a safe choice. Good preparation is essential to building your confidence. More confidence will result in less driving test nerves. Your driving instructor should help you with the above, but it is important that you feel confident in yourself. If you feel confident with the above, you will feel confident within yourself to take the test. If your driving instructor says you are ready, then you have done all you can.

TO SUMMARISE

Again preparation. Much of your driving test nerves can be reduced by not only preparing for the driving test by increasing your driving skills, but by easing your mind through mental preparation.

- Understand exactly what will happen on the driving test.

- Have the ability to perform all the test manoeuvres confidently.

- Read tips on how to pass the driving test so to understand what the examiner is expecting from you.

- Know all 19 Show Me Tell Me questions and answers and how they are relevant to your car.

 - Make sure you are at ease with independent driving.

 - Gain a familiarisation with the difficult areas of the test route in your area.

 - Increase lessons as the test gets closer.

 - Have a mock driving test.

 - Ensure both yourself and your instructor are confident about your ability to pass the test.

 - Tell as few people as possible about your test.

 - Book your driving test at the quietest times of day.

 - Using herbal remedies may help.

 - Practicing and perfecting breathing exercises well before the test can reduce nerves.

 - Brisk walk before test begins.