

Steering & Corners With Sharp Drive

Good steering and cornering starts with 'eyes up' driving and the right driver position. Steer with a light grip and hands at quarter to three. Your thumbs rest up the inside of the wheel. Slightly bent arms counteract the 'rake' of the wheel. With straight arms your shoulder will be pulled out of the seat when your arm reaches the top of the wheel, reducing seat support against the side forces and causing you to hang on to the wheel for support.

You should initiate turns with a smooth twist of the wheel with both hands pushing and pulling together. Small, shuffling hand movements cause jerky steering inputs. If you have been taught a 'push pull' steering method, be sure to only do complete 180 degree hand movements. Otherwise, don't move your hands around the wheel unnecessarily. Putting your hand inside the wheel, or steering with an inverted hand is a common but risky habit which drivers are often unaware of.

Similarly, leaning against the door, steering one-handed is only going to give you backache at the end of day. Steer with both hands as much as possible, only taking one hand off the wheel when absolutely necessary. Keep your eyes up approaching a corner, looking as far into it as you can. Read the corner so you can judge correctly where to steer the vehicle. For corners that don't require braking, steer with a big, smooth arc, keeping your eyes up on the exit.

For corners you do have to slow down for the 'Golden Rule' is 'slow in, drive out'. Otherwise, the opposite applies, 'fast in, spin out'. The most common mistake is going into the corner too fast, braking in the corner and losing control. If the corner appears to tighten up and you steer harder to finish the corner, that is a driver error, not a road design error. You did not slow down enough for that corner. Make the golden rule work. You must brake before it's too late.

Steering while braking causes 'tail out' skids, tire wear and means you have entered the corner too fast. Never brake and steer, even at low speeds. When you've finished braking the vehicle is at its slowest and its tyres have maximum grip, then turning smoothly and firmly.

Accelerating too hard and too soon causes loss of control and wastes fuel and tyre rubber. Always use the accelerator and brake smoothly. Stay completely in your lane and don't cross the centreline around corners. Stay away from the centreline around blind corners, in case an approaching vehicle is running wide as they exit the corner.

Remember, 'skid control' is an oxymoron. If you skid, you are out of control. You can prevent skids with good cornering technique, so for more information on advanced driving skills courses, advanced driver training and fleet safety, please go to <http://www.sharpdrive.co.nz> .

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