

GR8Drive Driving School

GR8drive Driving School is owned by Gaz Reynolds who is regularly featured on television and radio shows including LBC Radio and Harrow FM (See our You Tube Page at <https://www.youtube.com/user/GRDrive>). Visit www.gr8drive.com for details.

Learning to drive: how long will it take me?

So you want to learn to drive?

Congratulations! Driving is a skill many people cannot live without. Whether it's for work, to go shopping, for leisure or travel, driving is a useful skill, giving you the freedom to go where you want, when you want, in the comfort of your own vehicle.

What skills do I need?

Learning to drive requires patience, concentration, practice, and a good knowledge of the Highway Code. Don't expect to be perfect from day 1. You *will* make mistakes but learn from them and keep practicing. Make sure each session is 'good' practice, don't fall into bad habits, and you *will* improve.

Driving requires good psychomotor skills, which in simple terms means you have to be able to coordinate the processes in your brain with the movements your body makes. For example try patting your head with one hand and rubbing your belly with the other. Your brain needs to tell each hand to do a different thing but at the same time. Don't worry if you find this difficult, your psychomotor skills will develop with practice.

How long will it take me to learn to drive?

The reality is you never really stop learning to drive. Passing the practical test is just the beginning, enabling you to drive unsupervised. Throughout your life whilst driving you will continue to meet different, often unexpected situations on the roads, which will require you to react accordingly, drawing on the knowledge of past experiences and learning from the outcomes of the new ones. Your lessons will help develop the foundations for safe and considerate driving to help you deal with most circumstances.

When asked 'when do you want to pass your practical driving test by' most people answer 'as soon as possible'. Which prompts the question of how long will it take? Everyone learns at different speeds so don't be disheartened if you feel you aren't making as much progress as one of your friends. It isn't a race! The important thing is to understand what you are doing, be safe, and develop the confidence to be able to drive on your own in familiar and unfamiliar surroundings. Usually ones progress follows a 'learning curve' where initially a lot of improvement is made but then slows down throughout the course as more and more information is accumulated and processed together.

Currently the DVSA (Driving Standards Agency) report that on average those who pass their driving test have had approximately 45 hours of professional training combined with 22 hours of private practice. It is important to realise that learners may require more or less practice than this to reach test standard. However, obtaining enough driving experience to be able to cope unsupervised and

unaccompanied in all situations one may meet on the road, can only be achieved by putting in the hours of practice. Remember, just because you are test standard it doesn't mean you are guaranteed to pass the practical driving test. You have to drive your best for approximately 40 minutes and a minor lapse in concentration may lead to a serious or dangerous fault, resulting in a fail. Once you have passed your driving test, continue to learn, don't be afraid to ask for help with situations you are unsure of, and keep yourself updated regularly with the ever changing rules of the road which you can find in the Highway Code.

Regular practice is essential to maintain consistency in your driving and so as you do not forget what you have been taught between lessons. A minimum of 2hrs tuition per week is recommended. In our opinion 4 to 6hrs a week is probably ideal. Intensive courses (driving 6hrs or more a day for several days in a row) may get you through the test in a relatively short period of time but aren't necessarily best practice. Your brain needs time between lessons to process the information you have been taught and your motor skills need time to develop. Information overload may actually reduce your driving ability and it is unlikely you will retain enough of the information you are provided with to continue to drive safely in the years to come. Gradual repetition and consolidation is the best way to develop your knowledge and expertise.

Remember that before you can even book your practical driving test you must pass your theory test. Also when you come to book your practical test the next available date may be 8 weeks or more away. Your instructor will help you plan a suitable time for your test and structure your lessons up to this date to keep your tuition consistent.