

Drivers education for older drivers remains for 2 years, HF/E researcher finds

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In seeming contrast to the notion that the elderly often have memory problems, a new study from an HF/E researcher finds driver retraining to be an effective strategy for improving the safe-driving habits of older drivers over the long term.

In his *Human Factors* article, "The Long-Term Effects of Active Training Strategies on Improving Older Drivers' Scanning in [Intersections](#): A Two Year Follow-up to Romoser and Fisher (2009)," Matthew R. E. Romoser conducted a follow up study to see if participants from a 2009 study who received training retained the safe driving behaviors. In 2009, the participants that received simulator training and video reviews of their driving performance increased their likelihood of scanning while negotiating an intersection by 100%.

Healthy older drivers, 70-89 years of age, from the trained and control groups of his previous study participated in a follow-up field drive in their own vehicles. Researchers recorded secondary looks, defined as looking away from the immediate path of the vehicle while entering intersections toward regions to the side from which other vehicles could appear. The participants' road-scanning behaviors were recorded using a head-mounted [camera system](#).

Two years after their training, [older drivers](#) in the trained group still took secondary looks on average 73% of the time, more than one and a half times as often as pre-training levels. Control group drivers, who averaged secondary looks 41% of the time, saw no significant change in

performance over the 2-year period.

"Training in the form of actively practicing target skills in a simulator provides drivers a means by which to reincorporate previously extinguished behaviors into their driving habits," says Remoser.

The study's results can guide the development of mature-driver retraining programs that might be incorporated into car insurance discount programs or future state licensing regulations.

Provided by Human Factors and Ergonomics Society

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