



# 20

top tips for

# long

distance drivers



**VAUXHALL**  
Raising the Standard

With over 30 million drivers on the UK's roads, we sit among the highest driver populated nations in the world, and with an increasingly flexible workforce, travel to work distances are growing at an unprecedented rate.

Vauxhall is particularly aware of this, with its two UK plants spread more than 200 miles apart, from Ellesmere Port on the Wirral to Luton in Bedfordshire – its employees are very aware of the problem of long distance driving, especially as there are also over 400 dealerships spread across the British Isles.



With more than 20 million cars now on our roads it is evident that we must take extra care that when driving long distances we are at our most alert and cautious on the road.

The driving force behind this guide is Vauxhall's involvement with the Wooden Spoon Society's Vauxhall Four Peaks Challenge. Vauxhall is the main sponsor of the challenge, and provides over 50 vehicles for the participating teams to travel between the four highest peaks of Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland, respectively Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike, Snowdon and Carantouhill, all in the space of 48 hours and in aid of charity.



The distance covered in completing this epic quest is immense – nearly 2,000 miles. As a result Vauxhall, in conjunction with the AA, has produced these 20 top tips for safe long distance driving to help make this mammoth charity quest a safe one, and to help other long distance drivers have a safe and comfortable journey, wherever they are.



# Be aware, be awake

## 1. On long journeys

both cars and drivers need to be in the right condition. Cars and drivers suffer the effects of pressure and can become worn out – cars break down, drivers fall asleep. Be sure to prepare yourself and the vehicle prior to long distance journeys.

## 2. Never drive for more

than eight hours in a day, if the journey is likely to take longer than this, schedule for it to take two days.



### 3. Holiday or Sunday

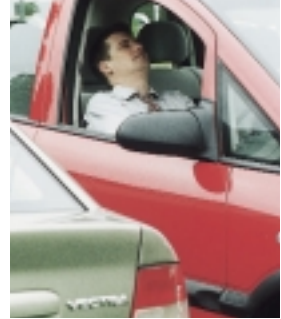
**drivers** are not the only ones susceptible to sleepiness and paying little attention to the road, business drivers and commuters suffer too, never let your eyes or mind wander from the road.

4. **Activities** partaken between periods of driving are tiring too, even things as relaxing as walking in the hills or sitting back at a business lunch. Always be sure to take a break or a 15 minute nap before returning to the roads.

5. **Never drive for more than two hours** without a break. Breaks should be more frequent for those not used to long distance driving.

6. **People** are most susceptible to sleep at times when they would normally be asleep – particularly in the early hours of the morning. Research shows that our natural alertness is at its lowest levels between the hours of 12 am and 6 am. If it can possibly be avoided, do not drive at these times.

7. **Everyone suffers** from increased sleepiness after meals – an involuntary post lunch snooze is a risk faced by all drivers. Reduce this risk by taking a short sleep break after meals before returning behind the wheel.



e, be alert,  
be safe!

8. **Stay within personal limitations.**

When feeling tired or sleepy, be sure to take a break, but always find a safe place to stop and only use the hard shoulder in emergency situations.

9. **There is only one way**

to counter sleepiness and tiredness – a short nap.

10. **Always resist** the urge to push-on beyond comfortable driving.



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## 11. If finishing a journey

is essential, and tiredness creeps in near completion of the trip, caffeine can act as a stimulant, but at least two cups of strong coffee are required for this to be effective.

You are in  
seat, you

control

don't let the car or

condition

cont

12. Wherever possible,  
share the driving to avoid fatigue.

13. Take extra care on unfamiliar roads as venturing into the unknown exerts more pressure and strain on the driver. It is equally important however, to avoid a false sense of security when returning to familiar ground.

14. Always research and become familiar with the route and highlight points on the map for taking breaks before setting off on a long journey, this reduces pressure and allows the driver more time to concentrate on the driving rather than the directions.



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15. Be sure to set a realistic time-scale for the journey. Many people overestimate the speed they can achieve on “A” roads, and underestimate the distances between unfamiliar places. Most accidents happen towards the end of long journeys, when drivers rush to try and make up lost time.

# Lost time can never be made up, only allowed for at the beginning of a journey

**16.** Think about your passengers, especially young children who may become bored on long journeys and can be a major distraction to drivers. If possible prepare for this by having activities, i.e. card games etc. to keep them occupied during the journey – who knows it may work for the adults too!

**17.** Remember to check the weather forecast at least 24 hours before a journey. If the forecast promises fog, snow, ice etc. remember to adjust timings and arrangements accordingly as a day's bad weather driving is much more stressful and tiring than a day's driving in good weather.





**18. Always allow** margin for error in scheduling any journey with a rigid deadline, this reduces stress when time is lost in traffic, changing weather conditions etc.

**19. Once out** of the UK, starting to drive on the right-hand side is stressful and this will reflect in drowsiness levels later in the day. If possible a break should always be taken before hitting the road again upon arrival in an overseas country.



**20. Never forget** that conditions can change drastically over eight hours and several hundred miles, and therefore driving conditions and behaviour may need to be adjusted many times during the course of the journey. Risks are increased substantially if this basic law of the road isn't adhered to. The only way to be sure of adjusting accordingly is to be prepared and to remain alert at all times; remember that tiredness and alertness do not go together, so take tiredness out of the equation by taking frequent breaks.



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