

## OVERCOMING NERVOUSNESS ON THE ROAD OR ROAD TEST

A lot of people say they don't like driving or are afraid of getting behind the wheel. This specific fear might make you feel as though your life is in danger when you're driving or riding in a car. You might even experience panic attacks, racing heart, rapid breathing, or feelings of terror. If your road test thought and think you may fail is controlling you and preventing you from driving with ease, it's important to face it. This way, you can get back behind the wheel and take control of THE ROAD OR THE TEST.

### A. Relaxation Techniques

1. Create a calm environment in the car. You should feel comfortable just sitting in the car regardless of whether or not moving. Wear comfy clothes and shoes. Practice sitting in the car and relax before you begin driving.
2. Even the most confident driver can become anxious if there are noisy passengers in the car. Make sure the car is quiet.
3. Clean and order inside your car can make you feel good.

### B. Abdominal breathing.

If you begin to feel nervous, your neck and chest muscles tighten, begin breathing deep into your lungs. Inhale slowly through your nose with the focus of getting air to the bottom of your lungs. Let your belly expand and pause for a moment while you hold your breath. Slowly exhale and let your whole body relax.

You can repeat this process 10 times counting backwards from ten on each exhale. Try to complete three sets of 10.

### C. Use positive statements.

They are short positive statements that remind you that you can make changes. With driving, the type of affirmations that you might want to use include:

I am driving carefully and within the speed limit. Careful driving is safe driving.

Driving is a common, everyday activity. I am an alert driver participating in a common activity with care.

I do not have to drive fast. I will observe always posted signs.

I have planned this journey from start to finish. I am well prepared.

- D. **Write down your fears.** Be specific and write down what things you fear about driving or the test. Then, go through and rank these fears from what you fear the least to what causes a full panic. This will help you gradually expose yourself to your fears. But, you'll slowly work your way through your fears so that you never feel truly out of control.

For example, holding the keys in your driveway might be something you fear the least while driving on the highway can cause you to be nervous.

- E. **Take gradual steps.** Start with the least feared item on your list and gradually expose yourself until you no longer feel anxious. Once you've mastered an item on your list, move on to the next thing on your list or scale. For example, you list might expose yourself to fears like these (ranked from least to greatest feared)

Hold your car keys and look at your car in the driveway

Sit inside of your car, working up to 5 minutes

Drive around the block

Drive in your neighborhood making right turns, then left turns

Drive on a main street taking left turns at traffic lights or stop signs

Drive on a highway in the right lane for 1 to 2 exits

Drive on a highway in the left lane for 2 exits

Drive on the highway changing lanes past cars for 3 to 5 exits

So enjoy and relax, your day to day driving or road test success is determined by a good set of mind and this for sure will increase your confidence and get your license you have dreamed of. Happy driving...