

Making tracks

Top Ten Tips For Testing Teacher

You put a lot of trust in your driving instructor, but how can you make sure you're getting decent service? Here's the **etc.** guide to good driving lessons, and good instructors

- 1 Keep 'em regular.** A series of lessons will do you more good than a handful of random ones.
- 2 Are you experienced?** A good driving school will assess what you already know to establish a base for your training and save time.
- 3 Be gentle.** The first few hours are the hardest and weirdest, especially if you've never driven before. You need to learn the basics of car control, clutch control, and so

on. Boring, perhaps, but better than whacking into a depressingly solid lamp post as soon as you try to pull away.

- 4 Go play in the traffic.** This should only be when you're feeling confident, and your instructor thinks you're ready – driving in traffic for the first time can be daunting.
- 5 Mix it up a little.** Once you've cracked the basics your lessons should have plenty of variety to keep you sharp: learning new stuff, and practising things you've done before.
- 6 The fakesoundofprogress?** You'll never know when you're ready for the test without keeping track of your progress. Your instructor should document what you've done and what's left to do. If they don't, poke them with a stick until they do.
- 7 Homework.** Your instructor should be taking you through the theoretical wranglings from the first lesson: you can't take your driving test until you've passed all the theory, so you need to get on it early. Yes, it's more revision, but so worth it in the long run...

8 Examiners are evil and will curse your family name forever. Well, no, actually, but that's the myth among those who have taken tests. You can go some way to dodging the anxiety by taking a mock test – if your instructor doesn't suggest this as test-day approaches, get that stick out again.

- 9 Failure isn't fatal.** If the mock test doesn't go well, don't worry about it. Either take more lessons, or postpone the test. You can still go for it if you want, but make an honest assessment of your abilities with your instructor. If you're not ready, postponing is cheaper in the long run than having to take another test.
- 10 It's not you, it's me.** You end up spending as much as 40 hours with an instructor while learning; if you don't get on, it's going to affect how well you learn stuff. Find a driving school that lets you change instructors with minimal hassle.

Make sure you're getting all of this, from your lessons and your instructor, and you'll be on the road in no time. Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines... **etc.**

Manoeuvre of the month: The Reverse Park

Here's how to park the **etc.** Mini Cooper S, in four steps...

