

Maximizing independence at home and on the road!



Functional Stability and Mobility, LLC

www.homeanddriving.com

Maintaining your independence at home and on the road

Megan Frazier, MS, OTR, DRS

Course Objectives

- How does neuropathy affect my driving?
- What are warning signs to look for?
- Resources
- Explore modified driving options
- What is aging in place?
- What are simple home modifications?

Who am I?

- Megan Frazier, MS, OTR, DRS
- Occupational Therapist and Driver Rehab Specialist
- Over 15 years experience working with aging populations & 10 years in Central Texas
- Owner of Functional Stability and Mobility, LLC
- Contact Information:
 - (254) 290-3333
 - Megan@homeanddriving.com
 - www.homeanddriving.com

The Meaning of Driving



Freedom and spontaneity



Status and identify



Only way to get places



Sense of self-worth



Desire to help others



Connection to the past

Driving and the Body



<https://www.whiterivercu.com/3-things-you-need-to-know-before-buying-a-new-car>

Driving and the Body

Strength

Flexibility

Endurance

Reaction Time

Range of motion




How does Neuropathy affect these skills?

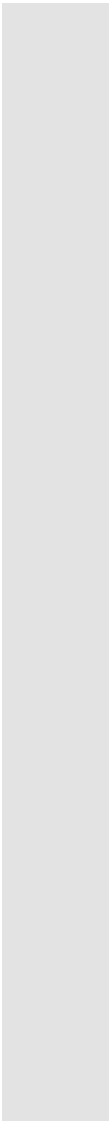
- Pedal Confusion
- Unable to feel pressure placed on pedals
- Increased fatigue
- Increased pain

How does Neuropathy affect these skills?

- Onset of weakness while driving
- Weakness in arm, leg or both affecting ability to steer or push pedals
- Difficulty with getting in/out of vehicle
- Slow reaction time



Typical Challenges for Drivers

- Making left turns at intersections, especially without a traffic light
 - Driver distraction
 - Driving at dusk or at dawn
 - Merging into another traffic lane
 - Failing to yield to right-of-way
- 

Falls and Driving

- Older adults who have fallen are 40% more likely to have an accident
- Account for 177,000 additional crashes each year
- Falls affect mental well being making people more fearful
- Result in injury and reduced mobility
- Result in changes in driving behaviors

["Associations between Falls and Driving Outcomes in Older Adults: Systemic Review and Meta-Analysis."](#) *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*

Driving and Medication

- Some medications increase a driver's risk
 - Neurontin:
 - trouble staying alert,
 - difficulty concentrating,
 - maintain control of vehicle
 - changes in demeanor
- Prescription drugs are the most prevalent of all drugs found in drugged drivers involved in fatal crashes (46.5%)
- Roadwise RX: Understand how your medication affects your driving
<http://roadwiserx.com/>

State Requirements for Driving



<https://i.pinimg.com/564x/b4/oe/ad/b4,oeadd1677d579ccd128acc8e7eaa3c.jpg>

Driver proficiency test is recommended to determine driving impairment is causing weakness or sensory loss

Periodic review is recommended if the neurologic dysfunction is severe

State Requirements for Driving with Neuropathy

Warning Signs



<https://i.redd.it/2coa15058pzy.jpg>

Warning Signs



Inappropriate driving speeds (too fast or too slow)



Accidents or near misses



Difficulty with parking (parking outside the lines, taking up multiple spaces)



Other drivers often honk horns



Ticketed moving violations or warnings



Accidentally stepping on the wrong pedal

Warning Signs



FREQUENCY
AND SEVERITY
OF SIGNS



CHANGES IN
DRIVING SKILLS



LOOK FOR
PATTERNS



ALARMING
REACTIONS



TRACK
CHANGES OVER
TIME



ASK PARTNER,
FAMILY AND
FRIENDS

Self Assessment Tools

**I had no idea what
a three point
turn is, so I
just drove in a
circle three
times.**

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/1b/88/80/1b8880fb94e460d463c4c80c6a829aa1.jpg>

Self Assessment Tools

- SAFER Driving The Enhanced driving decision workbook
- Drivers 65 Plus: Check your performance
- Drive Well Toolkit
- Driver's 55 Plus: Check your own performance
- AARP & AAA

What can I do to do improve my driving skills?



ADJUST DRIVING
TIME



GIVE ENOUGH
TIME TO GET TO
APPOINTMENTS



CHOOSE DRIVING
ROUTES
INTENTIONALLY



BE AWARE OF
YOUR
SYMPTOMS



HAVE A PLAN IF
YOU NEED HELP

What can I do to do improve my driving skills?

- Attend a Car Fit Event
- AARP Driver Safety Course
- State Defensive Driver Course



What can I do to do improve my driving skills?



Occupational
Therapist &
Driver Rehab
Specialist
(OT DRS)



<https://paspahang.org/funny-dog-rescue-memes/>

An Occupational Therapist that has had specialized training in assessing driving and community mobility needs

Look at how your Peripheral Neuropathy affects your ability to drive and what additional training and possible modifications you may need

Complete On-Road Evaluations and training to determine Fitness to Drive

Teach people how use modified controls (left foot accelerator, hand controls, steering wheel modifications, additional mirrors) as needed

Most are certified by the Association for Driver Rehab Specialists (ADED) or the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)

What is an OT DRS?

What does an evaluation look like?

Clinical Evaluation

- Looks at vision, strength, reaction time, memory, attention, sequencing, sensation, range of motion

On-Road Evaluation

- Looks at ability to react to on-road demands, scan environment and react to hazards, obey traffic laws and signals, vehicle control

What equipment is available?

Hand controls



https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=oahUKEwj7wI_p_LbkAhVHKawKHR-WBUIQMwjLAigVMBU&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.themobilityresource.com%2Fadaptive-driving-equipment%2Fhand-controls%2F&psig=AOvVaw3y9v9Rw2vZY1vd_2WQotTv&ust=1567679890733844&ictx=3&uact=3

What equipment is available?

Left Foot Accelerator



https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=oahUKEwibkpf_i_bbkAhUQlawKHehXCSsQMwivAigXMBc&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DmTjHiQETWF8&psig=AOvVaw3mT1xoEBpVBVnRejTIZbDn&ust=1567680144657016&ictx=3&uact=3

What equipment is available?

Steering Wheel Modifications



https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=oahUKEwj6ZvH_rbkAhUDVaoKHQAsCMQQMwj6AihSMFI&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.accessmobilityin.com%2F%3Fattachment_id%3D1675&psig=AOvVaw11dDilXgrwRcS8XfQl_5cv&ust=1567680356541683&ictx=3&uact=3

Additional Suggestions

- See your doctor regularly
- Take your medication as prescribed
- Exercise and eat healthy
- Modify home to assist with aging in place
- Set up a driving retirement plan



Aging in Place

- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines aging in place as "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level"



Keeping yourself safe at home

- Living Room
 - Remove throw rugs and cords
 - Increase lighting
 - Increase set heights
 - Use voice activated controls (Amazon Echo dot, Google Home)

Keeping yourself safe at home

- Kitchen
 - Rearrange cabinets
 - Handles vs knobs
 - Kitchen sink with spray head
 - Keep a seat close

Keeping yourself safe at home

- Bathroom
 - Shower chair & Tub transfer bench
 - Hand held shower head
 - Grab bars
 - Nonskid flooring
 - Lower setting on water heater

The image features a white background with two teal-colored geometric shapes. On the left, there is a large teal trapezoid that tapers towards the right. On the right side, there is a smaller teal triangle that tapers towards the left. The text 'Questions or Comments' is centered between these two shapes.

Questions or
Comments

Thank You!

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns in the future.

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