

Hand controls

✓ **Handbrake:** When you apply the handbrake (or parking brake), cables are pulled taut that yank on the back brakes. Because only two brakes are applied, it's important to apply the handbrake only when stationary, otherwise you could cause a skid. You should use the handbrake when parking, when moving off on a slope or when waiting in traffic. If you have time to apply it and release it without causing a delay, then pull it up. If you were hit from behind, it would help prevent you being shunted forward - perhaps out of a junction.

✓ **Gearstick:** Most cars have five forward gears. The low gears are strong but slow (like an elephant), while the high gears are fast but have less pulling power (like a cheetah). An easy way to think of a good speed for each gear is to add a zero to it - 10mph is good for 1st gear, 20mph is good for 2nd etc. However, the gears have a much wider range than that, which you will get used to with practice. When increasing speed, you should change gear before the engine sounds under strain. After slowing down, remember to select an appropriate lower gear before trying to speed up again.

✓ **Steering wheel:** The steering wheel only turns the front wheels of the car. When the wheels are straight, its T-bar should look straight. In most cars, the steering wheel will reach full lock when you turn it about 1.5 turns in either direction. So, when the T-bar looks straight, the front wheels could be straight or they could be pointing one turn to the left or right. Try to remember how much you are turning the wheel - but you should get a feel for the steering very quickly.

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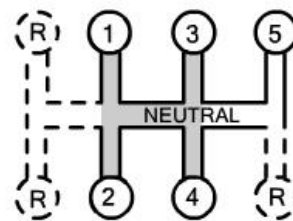


The hand controls



The handbrake

- * Use when parking, waiting or moving off on a slope
- * Never use while moving - this could cause a skid
- * Push the button in before pulling it up or pushing it down, to release it from its ratchet
- * If it pulls up too far, it may need to be adjusted
- * A dashboard light appears when it is applied



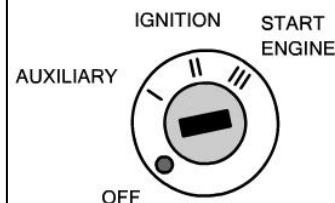
The gear stick

- * Gears 1, 2, 3 & 4 form an H pattern in most cars
- * Position of reverse varies. It may have safety lock
- * Springs move stick under 3rd when it's in neutral
- * When changing gear, 'palm' the stick & look ahead
- * Use low gears for power & high gears for speed
- * Skip intermediate gears as necessary



The steering wheel

- * Hold hands at 'ten to two' or 'quarter to three'
- * Your arms should have a slight bend in them
- * Hold with palms & thumbs rather than fingertip
- * Shuffle the wheel using the 'pull push method'
- * Use fingertips to apply indicators, moving the stick the same way the steering wheel will go



Ignition switch

- * Check handbrake & neutral before starting car
- * When car starts, let go of key immediately
- * If the key won't turn, the steering lock may be on - try again while shuffling the wheel
- * Turn the key gently so it doesn't break off
- * Make sure you have a spare set of keys at home