

# Vehicle options for senior drivers

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In the United States today there are more 19 million drivers over the age of 70. By 2024, one in four drivers will be aged 65 plus. The number of Americans aged 55 to 74 is projected to double by the year 2030, causing automakers to pay attention to the needs of older car buyers.

And while many "baby boomers" have made financial retirement plans, they have not considered retiring from driving. Without support, many members of this aging population may lose their ability to drive and to live independently.

The University of Florida National Older Driver Research and Training Center is helping older people keep their safe driving ability for as long as possible. The Center and AAA have a list of 30 safety features that should be on cars for older drivers. Among them are:

- \* Active head restraints that move forward to cushion the head if the car is hit from behind
- \* Adjustable pedals so petite people can safely reach them without being too close to airbags
- \* Power-operated seats that don't require much strength to adjust
- \* Large knobs and buttons, which are easier to see and are less distracting
- \* Large/wide-angle mirrors to help those who have difficulty turning to look in the rear when changing lanes or backing up
- \* Moderate height offers flexibility in entering and leaving a vehicle.
- \* Four doors make entry and exit easier and the doors are usually not as heavy as a two-door vehicle
- \* Keyless entry is good for arthritic hands that find it hard to turn a key
- \* Tilt steering allows the driver to find a safe distance from the front airbag, as well as a comfortable position alleviating knee, back, hip, neck or shoulder pain
- \* Brake assist helps the driver generate enough force during emergency braking to stop the car in time to prevent a collision
- \* Low trunk height makes it easier to load and unload

To see a comprehensive list of features and specific examples of vehicles loaded with senior-friendly features, visit [AAA.com/seniors](http://AAA.com/seniors).

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