



WELLNESS WORKSHEET 119

Are You an Aggressive Driver?

To find out if you are an aggressive driver, check any of the following statements that are true for you:

- _____ I consistently exceed the speed limit; I'm often unaware of both my speed and the speed limit.
- _____ I frequently follow closely behind the car in front of me.
- _____ If I feel the car in front of me is going too slowly, I tailgate.
- _____ I change lanes frequently to pass people.
- _____ I seldom use my turn signal when changing lanes or turning.
- _____ I often run red lights or roll through stop signs.
- _____ I react to what I feel is another driver's mistake by cursing, shouting, or making rude gestures; by blocking a car from passing or changing lanes; by using high beams; or by braking suddenly in front of a tailgater.
- _____ My personality changes and I become more competitive when I get behind the wheel.
- _____ I often get angry or impatient with other drivers and with pedestrians.
- _____ I would consider pulling over for a personal encounter with a bad driver.

Each of these statements is characteristic of aggressive drivers; the more items you checked, the greater your road rage. If you checked even one statement, try the following steps to reduce your hostility the next time you get behind the wheel.

- _____ Allow enough time for your trip to reach your destination without speeding.
- _____ Avoid driving during periods of heavy traffic.
- _____ Don't drive when you are angry, tired, or intoxicated.
- _____ Imagine that the other drivers are all people that you know and like. Be courteous and forgiving.
- _____ Listen to soothing music or a book on tape, or practice a relaxation technique such as deep breathing.

Develop at least two additional strategies that work for you:

1. _____
2. _____

If road rage is still a problem for you, take a course in anger management.

Even if you are successful at controlling your own aggressive driving impulses, you may still encounter an aggressive driver on the road. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety recommends the following strategies to avoid being a victim of an aggressive driver.

- Avoid behaviors that may enrage an aggressive driver; these include cutting cars off when merging, driving slowly in the left lane, tailgating, and making rude gestures.
- If you make a mistake while driving, apologize. In surveys, the most popular and widely understood gestures for apologies include raising or waving a hand and touching or knocking the head with the palm of your hand (to indicate "What was I thinking?").
- Refuse to join in a fight. Avoid eye contact with an angry driver, and put distance between your car and his or her vehicle. If you think another driver is following you or trying to start a fight, call the police on a cellular phone or drive to a public place.

(over)

Think of two additional strategies for dealing with an aggressive driver:

1. _____
2. _____

INTERNET ACTIVITY

To further assess your risk for aggressive driving, take the quiz at the Web site for the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety (<http://www.aaafoundation.org/quizzes>).

How did you score? Did the results indicate that aggressive driving may be a problem for you?

Research additional strategies for reducing your own road rage and for avoiding other aggressive drivers. Identify three strategies for avoiding problems associated with aggressive driving—your own or that of another driver. Visit one or more of the sites listed below or perform a search.

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety: <http://www.aafts.org>

Aggressive Driving Issues Conference: <http://www.aggressive.drivers.com>

National Highway Transportation Safety Administration: Aggressive Driving:
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/enforce/adsped.htm>

New York State Department of Motor Vehicles: Aggressive Driving:
<http://www.nysgtsc.state.ny.us/aggr-ndx.htm>

Site(s) visited (URL): _____

Strategies for reducing aggressive driving:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____
