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Why Take This Course?

Do you ever wish you knew more about personal finance? No matter where you are in your financial journey, there always is more to learn. SAM's free online courses are not intended as financial advice, but as a starting point to raise awareness, to increase skills and knowledge related to personal finance, and to guide you to helpful resources.

Research shows that financial education is most effective when it is relevant to a decision you are faced with right now. This course covers:

- Analyzing current transportation expenses, challenges and opportunities.
- Preparing your finances to buy a new or used car.
- How auto insurance premiums are calculated and tips for lowering your premiums.

Disclaimers

Throughout this course, any reference to a specific company, commercial product, process or service does not constitute or imply an endorsement or recommendation by State of Vermont LiveWell Vermont, Smart About Money (SAM) or the National Endowment for Financial Education.

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INTRODUCTION



Source: [U.S. Census](#)

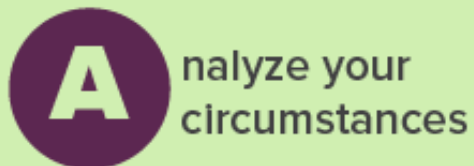


Make a “SAM” Plan

Use the SAM action steps to think through your options and make informed decisions that fit your lifestyle and values.



Review your current transportation needs and your ability to cover emergency expenses or repairs. Explore possible cost savings of alternative transportation and whether your insurance coverage is adequate to protect you and your assets.

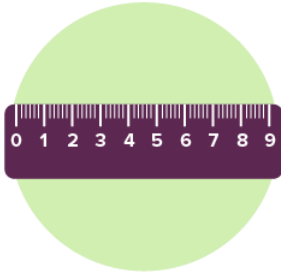


Calculate what you spend for transportation, ways to save money, pros and cons of travel options and your readiness to make a positive change.



Make plans to lower your transportation costs and get prepared for potential future changes.

SIZE UP YOUR SITUATION



Gather Your Transportation Numbers

Consider these questions about your current transportation needs, methods, expenses and options:

Time

We spend a lot of time just getting from place to place each day. Add up your typical travel numbers to see how much time you spend in transit.

		My Transportation Numbers
Commute Time	Calculate your average travel time to and from work/school, including dropping kids off or taking your spouse to work. Times may vary from day to day depending on weather, traffic, etc., so a ballpark figure is fine.	Average total daily commute time: _____ Multiply by the number of days you commute per week to get your average weekly travel time: _____
Other Destinations	Brainstorm other places you go each week and the average time it takes you to get there and back. If you typically combine trips to different places (e.g., the grocery store and the laundromat), then consider that one destination.	Average other weekly travel time: _____
		Average total weekly travel time (commute + other): _____ Multiply by four to get your average monthly travel time: _____



Are You Losing Time?

Is your driving time productive? One advantage of public transportation is that you are freed up to read, work, play games, listen to music, meditate, etc., without worrying about watching the road.

Time in the car can be productive too. Maybe you learn new things by listening to podcasts, relieve stress by singing at the top of your lungs or foster relationships by making phone calls while you commute — using a hands-free device, of course.

By examining your commuting habits, you might find ways to use this time more creatively. Or you might discover that your life would be enriched by trying out new ways of getting to your destination.

Distance

You might not realize just how much ground you cover on a regular basis. Track your mileage or use Internet tools to calculate your travel distances.

		My Transportation Numbers
Mileage	Track your mileage for a week or use an online map (such as Google Maps) to calculate how far you go to work, school and common destinations. Consider combined trips to different places as one destination.	Mileage to and from work/school: _____ Mileage to and from destination 1: _____ Mileage to and from destination 2: _____ Mileage to and from destination 3: _____ Mileage to and from destination 4: _____ Mileage to and from destination 5: _____
		Average total weekly mileage: _____ Multiply by four to get your average monthly mileage: _____



Make Your Mileage Work for You

When you drive, more mileage means more wear and tear on your vehicle. When you walk, bike or use other self-motored transportation, those same miles are opportunities to log steps on fitness trackers and step counters.



Expenses

Add up your typical monthly transportation expenses.

		My Transportation Numbers
Car Payments and Insurance	How much do you spend on car payments and insurance each month?	Average monthly car payment: _____ Average monthly insurance payment: _____
Parking / Storage Costs	How much do you spend on parking at your home or work, and garage space or other transportation storage per month?	Average monthly parking/storage costs: _____
Gas and/or Public Transit Fares	How much do you spend on gas or public transit fares per month?	Average monthly gas/fare costs: _____
Tolls and Express Lane Fees	Add up any tolls or lane fees you pay on a regular basis.	Average monthly tolls/lane fees: _____
Regular Car Maintenance	Calculate how much you typically spend on oil changes, tune-ups, car washes, detailing and other upkeep.	Average monthly maintenance costs: _____
Registration, Emissions and Licensing	If you renew your vehicle registration yearly, divide that by 12 to see how these expenses average out monthly.	Average monthly registration/ license fees (yearly divided by 12): _____
Emergency or Unexpected Car Repairs	Estimate how much you have spent over the past year on unplanned car repairs or parts, then divide by 12 to get your monthly average.	Average monthly repair costs: _____
Other	Any other recurring costs (e.g., personal property tax for vehicles).	
		Total average monthly transportation expenses: _____ Multiply by 12 to get your average yearly transportation expenses: _____



Calculate Your Transportation Expense Ratio

Even if you have no plans to change your transportation habits right now, it still can be useful to know how much of your income typically goes to transit costs.

Your transportation expense ratio is the percentage of your income that you spend on transportation costs.

To calculate your transportation expense ratio:

- Start with your average monthly (or yearly) transportation expenses.
- Divide this figure by your gross monthly (or yearly) income, before taxes and any other adjustments.
- The amount, expressed as a percentage, shows how much of your earnings are used to pay for transportation.

For example:

Monthly transportation expenses = \$400

Monthly gross income (before deductions) = \$4,000

$$400 \div 4,000 = 0.10$$

(move the decimal two places to the right)

Transportation expense ratio = 10 percent

You spend around 10 percent of your monthly income on transportation.



If you know that your salary is \$35,000 per year before deductions, divide this by the number of months you work per year to get your monthly gross salary. For example, if you work year round: $\$35,000 \div 12 = \$2,916.67$ (approximately \$2,917).

Dig deeper with SAM's Employment Basics Course.









How Do You Compare?

Americans spend between 14 and 19 percent of their gross yearly income on automobile transportation costs on average, according to the [Consumer Expenditures Survey](#) by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS).

Gas and oil costs constitute about 4 percent of gross income and insurance is about 2 percent.

How Your Age Affects Transportation Spending

According to a [BLS survey](#), the average annual U.S. household expenditure for automobile transportation in 2014 was \$9,073, nearly 14 percent of all household expenditures. This spending tends to [vary with age](#):

Under 25		\$5,700
25 - 34		\$9,000
35 - 54		\$10,500
55 - 64		\$9,500
65 - 74		\$5,500
75 or older		\$5,100



Transportation Opportunity Costs

Spending too much on transportation could mean sacrificing other things you want or need.

The costs of transportation options include cash outlays for purchasing and insuring your vehicle as well as opportunity costs (the benefits you give up by choosing something else) associated with your choice.

Assessing Opportunity Costs

For example, let's say you have an older car that needs new tires and a front-end alignment. You're not sure if you should invest in fixing your current vehicle or if you should put this money toward a new car.

The monetary cost of the repair includes parts and labor at the auto shop, but choosing to repair your older car also comes with opportunity costs such as:

- The price of any work time missed to take your car to the shop.
- Effort and time to find alternate transportation while the car is being fixed.
- Incentives you might have received by trading your older car in for a newer vehicle rather than fixing your car.
- Anxiety about spending money on a vehicle that might need to be replaced soon anyway.
- Using funds from savings, or adding to debt if you charge the repairs on a credit card.



What Would You Do?

What would be the opportunity costs of choosing to buy a newer vehicle now rather than fixing your older car?

Buying now could mean that you have to act fast, sacrificing time to research potential vehicles, dealerships and discounts, and increasing the risk of a decision you might later regret. Buying a car also could require more money up front than just doing the repair. A newer car could mean adding a car payment that you didn't have before, and possibly increasing your insurance premiums.

Alternate Transportation

How often do you commute or run errands using alternate transportation such as:



Walking or biking: ____times per week



Bus, train or ferry: ____times per week



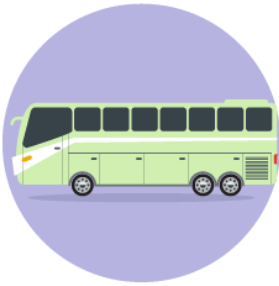
Carpool or rideshare: ____times per week



Other: ____times per week

Estimate your [carbon footprint using this calculator](#) from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.





Costs (and Benefits) of Public Transportation

If you live in an area with reliable access to public transit, the [American Public Transport Association](#) reports that you can save over \$10,000 per year on transportation costs.

There is no doubt that using public transportation can be a money saver – you usually only pay for it when you use it, and you do not have to pay anything extra for maintenance, repairs or ongoing improvements to transit vehicles (other than through your tax dollars).

If you are lucky enough to have an employer who provides public transit passes to employees, then the out-of-pocket cost can be minimal or nonexistent.

Many people choose alternate transit options for other reasons, such as:

- Decreased environmental impact (lessening one's carbon footprint).
- Increased well-being and decreased stress from driving.
- Time gained to work, read or relax.
- Decreased wear and tear on personal vehicles.
- Health benefits from walking to and from public transit stops or stations.
- Increased feeling of community from interacting with others on your transit route.

As with any choice, taking public transit has its trade-offs. When you consider public transportation options, recognize the opportunity costs associated with:

- Planning around transit schedules.
- Space and privacy limitations on crowded buses or trains.
- Delays due to weather conditions or mechanical failures.
- Close proximity to strangers.



Calculate your annual savings using public transportation and research transit options in your state using this [calculator from American Public Transit Association](#). And if your employer allows you to telecommute (work from home), that is another way to reduce your environmental impact.



What's the Future of Transportation?

Imagine you live in the early 1900s and travel mostly by horse and on foot. If you're lucky, your city might have motorized trolleys. On occasion, you take a train to go far distances and most consumer goods are transported on railroads and waterways. There are only about 8,000 automobiles in the United States, owned by the wealthiest Americans.

Can you imagine what will happen to transportation in the coming 20 years?



Check Your Knowledge

The Ford Motor Company introduced the Model T in 1908. How many Model Ts do you think were sold by the time Ford stopped making them in 1927?

Answer: 15 million

Innovation and technology are likely to change the way most of us move around in the next few decades. You might not be able to predict how transportation will change overall, but you can foresee some potential changes in your personal life.

ANALYZE YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES



Your Future Transportation Goals

What is in your future? It may be hard to say what will happen in the next five to 10 years, but you still can set goals for the short term and start thinking about the potential risks and opportunities down the road.

How might these events change your transportation needs?

- Will your children reach driving age?
 - You might want to buy an inexpensive used car to get your teen started.
- Do you plan to start a family?
 - It could be time for a larger family-friendly vehicle.
- Is someone in your household planning to retire?
 - You might consider reducing transportation costs to accommodate your expected retirement income.
- Will you want to keep your current vehicle for quite a while?
 - You might benefit from building up an emergency fund for major repairs.
- Will you need a new vehicle to meet your changing requirements?
 - Now could be the time to start saving for a down payment.
- Do you want to eliminate your monthly car payment?
 - You might start by looking at your other debt to see if it makes sense to put more toward your auto loan each month.



How Likely Is It?

Looking toward your future can help you set goals for staying financially fit – no matter what changes lay ahead. Use this chart to assess the likelihood of some common life changes:

Event	Likely to happen in less than 3 years	Likely to happen in 3 to 5 Years	Likely to happen in 5 to 10 Years	Likely to happen in more than 10 Years	Not likely to happen
Change in Marital Status (marriage, divorce, separation)					
Children Added to Family					
Drivers Added to Household					
Drivers Leaving Household (e.g., child leaving for college)					
Job Change					
Retirement					
Salary Increase					
Planned Medical Leave or Sabbatical					
Job Loss or Temporary Layoff					
Change in Driving Habits (e.g., increased driving for work, more trips to see relatives)					
Change in Residence (move to another home or city)					
Major Car Repairs					
Increase in Other Expenses (e.g., major home repairs, college tuition)					

Change in Public Transportation Access or Availability					
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Assess Your Insurance Coverage

No matter what type of transportation you use, you need to understand what your insurance covers and when it kicks in.

Types of Auto Insurance

	<i>What Does it Cover?</i>	<i>Is It Required by Most States?</i>
Bodily Injury Liability	Injuries you cause to another person	Yes
Property Damage Liability	Damage you cause to another person's property	Yes
Personal Injury Protection (PIP)	Your own and your passengers' injuries as well as lost wages and cost to fill in for the injured party's essential functions, such as child care	No
Collision Coverage	Damage to your vehicle from traffic accidents and collisions with trees, stop signs, etc.	No*
Comprehensive Coverage	Damage to your vehicle from weather, natural disasters, fire, vandalism, contact with animals such as deer or birds; can cover things like hail damage and cracked windshields	No*
Uninsured/Underinsured Motorist Coverage	Hit-and-run incidents and accidents caused by drivers with no insurance or not enough insurance to cover your damages; also can cover you if you are hit as a pedestrian	Depends on your state
Rental Car (while primary car is in the shop)	The cost of a rental car when your car needs repairs	No

*Even if collision and comprehensive coverage are not required by your state, these coverages might be required by your auto loan lender. These coverages often are sold separately with a deductible. The higher your deductible, the lower your monthly premium. However, a high deductible also means you will pay more out of your own pocket before the coverage kicks in.



How Much Insurance is Enough?

To answer this question, you need to understand your state's minimum requirements. However, it's wise to buy more than the minimum requirement since accidents often exceed this amount. If you are responsible for an accident and don't carry enough liability, then you could be held responsible for the difference. State minimum liability insurance limits tend to be very low (e.g., 25/50/15). However, a split limit of 100/300/50 is considered a minimum adequate amount. You also may want to increase your liability limit further with an umbrella liability policy. Talk to your insurance agent for additional information.

Understand the Numbers

When you see three numbers for liability insurance (for example, 25/50/15), read it as:

- Maximum bodily injury paid for one person in the accident – \$25,000
- Maximum for all injuries in the accident – \$50,000
- Maximum for property damage in the accident - \$15,000



State Insurance Requirements

Check this [map](#) from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners for links to state insurance departments and [this article from the Insurance Information Institute](#) for state minimum requirements.

Are You Covered?

Fill out this worksheet to get a quick summary of your coverage. Does anything stand out as needing further investigation? Make notes about who you need to speak with to find out more about this coverage and how it applies to your transportation needs.

Type of Coverage	What It Costs Me Annually	My Deductible	My Coverage Maximum	Notes
Bodily Injury				
Property Damage				
Medical Payments or PIP				
Collision				
Comprehensive				
Uninsured / Underinsured Motorist				
Rental Car (while primary car is in the shop)				
Other				

How Are Insurance Premiums Determined?

Insurers use information about your driving record and any insurance claims you have made to set your premiums.

The Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act entitles you to a free copy of your file, which you can request for free from [LexisNexis Personal Reports](#).

Most auto insurance policies include auto liability insurance, medical payments coverage, and collision and comprehensive coverage. According to the [Insurance Information Institute \(I.I.I.\)](#), insurers determine auto rates based on factors like those described below.

Factor	Impact
Ages and genders of all drivers on your policy	More mature drivers tend to have fewer accidents. Younger drivers and drivers who are not married will tend to pay more. Also, women often pay less than men.
Location and storage	If you park on the street, you can expect higher premiums than if you have a garage. If you live in a high crime area, you may pay more in premiums. Weather conditions, costs of car repairs, and number of litigations in your area also affect pricing.
Driving records	Speeding (or other traffic violations) and accidents where you are at fault will raise your premiums.
How much you drive	The more you drive, the more you pay. And if you use your car for business, you will pay higher premiums.
Your credit history	Many insurers use your ability to pay regularly and on time for credit cards, mortgages and other debts as an indicator of whether you will file a claim and how much it might cost. Bankruptcies and debt issues can raise your premiums.
Type of vehicle	The cost to repair your car (or replace it) can affect your premiums. You can expect to pay more for high-value cars or cars with special features.
Types and amounts of insurance you carry	Higher limits on liability, medical and uninsured/underinsured motorists will raise your premium. Getting a lower deductible also will raise your premiums.



Credit and Insurance Scores

Some states do not allow pricing based on financial, credit and risk factors. However, maintaining a good credit history can help your premiums in some cases. Dig deeper with SAM's Credit and Debt Basics and Insurance Basics courses.

Shop for the Best Auto Insurance Coverage

If you want to lower your insurance expenses, the [Insurance Information Institute \(I.I.I.\)](#) makes these recommendations:



Shop Around. Get three quotes from different types of insurance companies (that is, a company agent versus an independent broker). Don't just look at the price, ask for recommendations based on service and from your state's insurance department.



Modify your deductible. Raising your deductible means you pay more if you are involved in an accident, but it also means you pay less each time you have to pay your policy premium. Weigh the odds for yourself and consider the amount of money that you have set aside for emergencies.



Review your coverage annually. As your car ages, you can save money by reducing coverage. If your car is not worth 10 times the premium, consider dropping collision or comprehensive coverage.



Bundle coverages. Bundle your car, homeowners/renters, umbrella, and/or life insurance to save with a multi-policy discount.



Ask for discounts. Ask for low mileage discounts if you drive infrequently or regularly take public transportation. You may also qualify for discounts related to being accident-free or taking driving courses – especially as you age. Student drivers can qualify for discounts with good grades.

Know the Value of Your Vehicle

It pays to shop around and understand how to lower your premiums. If you need some help as you shop around, the [National Association of Insurance Commissioners \(NAIC\) offers this booklet](#).

YouTube URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvDIRSN3nG0>



You can save money on older car insurance premiums by dropping collision or comprehensive coverage. Find out what your car is worth at the [National Association of Auto Dealers \(NADA\)](#).



Are You Driving Uninsured?

What percentage of total income do you think the average American household spends on car insurance?

- Households earning the national average income of \$66,877 spend approximately 1.7 percent of total income on car insurance.
- Households in the lowest 60 percent of earners spend approximately 2 percent of total income on car insurance.
- Households in the lowest 20 percent of earners spend approximately 4.9 percent of total income on car insurance.

Low-income households typically will spend a larger proportion of their income on car insurance than the earners at the national average. This means nearly 1 in 7 Americans drives without insurance.

(Note: These figures are based on average income, which is skewed higher due to the inclusion of the wealthiest households. The median household income — which more accurately reflects the earnings of Americans in 2014 — was \$53,657.)



Get Help to Get Insured

[Check with your state's department of insurance](#). Some states, such as [California](#), [New Jersey](#) and [Hawaii](#), offer car insurance affordability programs to qualified drivers.



Optional Insurance Coverage

Focusing only on the price of insurance can lead you astray from purchasing the right kind of coverage you need. Depending on your circumstances, you might consider these optional types of coverage that can cost money, but could provide savings and peace of mind.

- **Rental Reimbursement** – Pays for a rental car when your car is being repaired for covered damages.
- **Towing (Roadside Assistance)** – Pays for towing if your car is disabled.
- **Guaranteed Asset Protection (GAP)** – Pays the gap between what your car is worth (cash value) and the amount due on your car loan if your car is stolen or totaled in an accident.



Discounts for Older Drivers

As you age, you may be eligible for discounts if you take approved accident-prevention courses. These low-cost driving courses sometimes are offered by your city or community organizations and are available through [AAA](#) and [AARP](#). Check with your insurer before you sign up to make sure the course is approved to get you a discount.

Rental Car Coverage

If you ever have rented a car, you know that “deer in the headlights” reaction when you’re asked if you want insurance to cover the rental. Perhaps you have elected for the insurance just to be safe, or maybe you have denied the coverage believing that you are covered through your own insurance.

Common rental car coverages include:

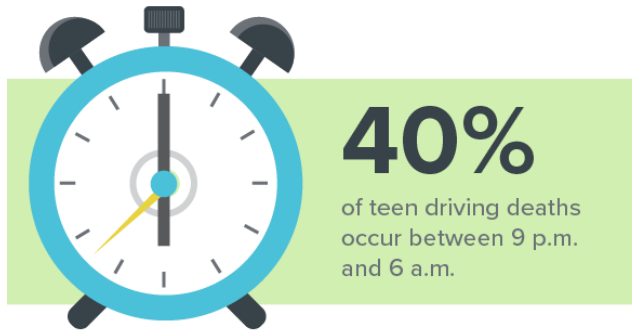
- **Loss Damage Waiver** – Coverage that waives your financial responsibility in case the car is damaged or stolen. There can be restrictions to the coverage, however. Comprehensive/collision coverage in your own auto policy probably will cover damage to a rental car.
- **Liability Insurance** – Although the rental company must provide the minimum amount of liability, it may not be enough. Your existing policy may provide additional coverage, but an umbrella policy or a nonowner liability policy of your own can provide additional coverage.
- **Personal Accident Insurance** – Covers you and passengers for medical and ambulance bills. Your health insurance or auto insurance already may cover this.
- **Personal Effects Coverage** – Coverage for anything that is stolen from the rental. Your homeowners or renters policy may already cover this.

YouTube URL <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1ei7wQqibA>



Before renting a car, the [Insurance Information Institute](#) suggests:

1. Call your insurance agent. Check for what coverage you already have and what additional coverage you may need. Also ask if you have (or can get) coverage for administrative fees, loss of use or towing in case of an accident.
2. Call the credit card company you will be using to rent the car. Often there will be some coverage provided through the card – be sure to get it in writing (or from the issuer's website).



Teen Drivers

If you have a soon-to-be driver or an existing teen driver in your household, educate yourself and your teen about making smart driving decisions. [InsureU](#), a program of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, suggests talking to your teens about expectations:

[Source: [InsureU](#)]

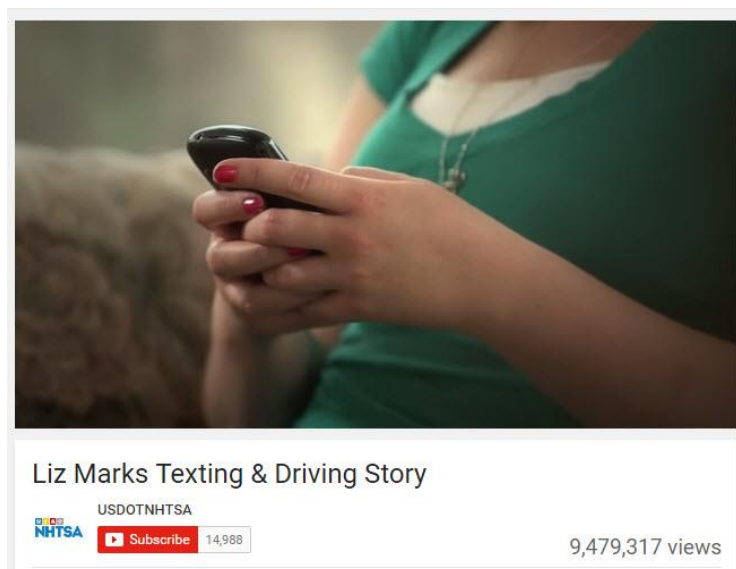
- Establish a [driving contract](#) that outlines rules and consequences related to driving.
- Set a driving curfew.
- Limit the number of passengers your teen can have in the car.
- Prohibit cellphone use while driving.
- Encourage and empower your teen to speak up if he or she feels another teen driver is being unsafe. Give them words to use as a way out of the situation.

Keep Your Teen Driver Costs Down

Check with your insurer to see if there are discounts for:

- Enrolling your teen in driver education courses
- Maintaining good grades
- Raising your deductible(s)
- Having your teen drive only the oldest family car
- Using technologies to monitor your teen's driving habits

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7911kgJJZc>



Accidents Waiting to Happen

No one wants to think about being in an accident, but a little bit of planning ahead can make all the difference when filing an insurance claim and protecting you from monetary damages.



6,064,000

Police-reported motor vehicle crashes per year.



6,400

Injuries per day in motor vehicle crashes.



90

Deaths per day in motor vehicle crashes.

Source: [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\) \(2014\)](#)



What to Do After an Accident

Prepare yourself in case of an accident by keeping the following in your car or stored in your mobile phone:

- Registration, auto insurance and roadside assistance information.
- Your and your family's medical information (allergies, blood types) in case you cannot answer questions at the scene of an accident.
- Pen and paper to take notes. Keep your smartphone charged and take pictures of damage, license plates and insurance information of others involved in the accident.

After the Accident

1. Pull over to a safe area to see if there are injuries and assess the damage. Never leave the scene. If you hit a parked vehicle, leave as much information you can about what happened and how to contact you.
2. Turn the engine off and set the parking brake. Turn on your hazard lights or set up warning triangles, even in the daytime.
3. Do not discuss who is at fault or how much insurance you have. Just stick to task of collecting information.
4. Call 911, especially if there are injuries. Even minor fender benders can cause injuries, so ask for medical assistance if you have any doubts.
 - a. If the police come to the scene, collect all relevant information about who is at the scene, badge numbers, etc. Ask for an accident report.
 - b. If the police cannot come to the scene, file an accident report with them at their station or online. Your insurance company will want such a report.
5. Collect all the information you can. Use your phone to take pictures or video of the scene, and write down information about the scene, including:
 - a. Name and contact information for all parties.
 - b. Driver's license numbers.
 - c. Registration, license plate numbers, makes and models of all vehicles involved.
 - d. Location, time of day and weather conditions for the scene.
6. Make your claim with your insurance company as soon as you can after the accident.

YouTube URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-hezNFUHA4>



Auto Accident



Insurance Information Institute



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1,078

1,353 views



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0



[Wreck Check Mobile App](#)

The National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) has a free mobile app you can download to walk you through what to do after an accident.

Download the app for iPhone or Android.

How to File an Insurance Claim

Each state has laws that govern the process, so contact your state department of insurance if you have questions or feel you are not being dealt with fairly. Take these steps to [file an auto insurance claim](#):

- Call your agent, whether you are at fault or not.
- Follow the directions your agent gives you to provide all documentation related to the accident and file your claim. You may need a police report.
- Keep copies of all your documentation and bills related to the accident. Jot down detailed notes following conversations about the accident. You need to know who you spoke with and what they said, at what date and time, and how to contact the person.
- Find out from your agent:
 - Time limitations for filing your claims and submitting bills.
 - Time limitations for resolving claim disputes.
 - When you can expect the insurance company to contact you.
 - Whether you need estimates for the damages.
 - Whether your policy covers a rental car while your car is being repaired and how much it covers.

YouTube URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3eEacLTxJA>





Repairing Your Car After an Accident

If you encounter [problems settling your claim](#):

- Contact your agent and share any supporting documentation you have.
- Check your policy for arbitration or appraisal services to help with disputes.
- Contact your state insurance department.
- Consult with an independent arbitrator or a lawyer.

When you file a claim, your insurance company will assign an adjustor to make a repair estimate on the claim. The adjustor likely will use [Kelley Blue Book](#) or the [National Association of Automobile Dealers](#) to obtain a depreciated value for your vehicle.

Know your rights to get the highest value for your vehicle:

- The claim adjustor's figure is a benchmark for what they think the vehicle is worth. Get your own independent estimate from a certified mechanic.
- You do not have to sign the agreement for the insurer's estimate. You should get at least one estimate on your own before agreeing on a cost.
- You can choose the repair shop you want to use. You don't have to use a shop in your insurance company's Direct Repair Program (a list of repair shops and dealers vetted and preapproved by your insurance company.)
- You don't have to use generic parts to restore your vehicle; you can choose to use original equipment manufacturer (OEM) parts. However, you may have to pay the price difference if your policy is based on using generic parts.
- You can argue your case for the cost of repair with the adjustor. Have estimates to back up your claims along with any records on your vehicle maintenance or upgrades.

What's Your Backup Plan?

If you typically drive to work or school, then being without your car because of an accident, repairs or other damage can cause big hassles. In addition to the cost of fixing your vehicle, you also might experience costs such as lost earnings when you can't get to work or the stress of relying on friends or family for rides.

Which of the following are available to you if you can't drive to work or school?

- Bus
- Light rail or commuter rail
- Ferry
- Friends and family
- Co-workers
- Bike
- Walk
- Subway
- Taxi
- Rideshares such as [Lyft](#) or [Uber](#)
- [Car share programs](#)
- Rental car
- Other



Challenge Yourself

If you normally drive to work or school and have never tried public transportation, use an online map (such as Google Maps) or your local public transit department's website to research which routes you would take and where you would get on and off public transit. Do a test run on a day when you're off work or school to try it out. This even can be a fun adventure for kids or grandkids to come along with you.

Car Care Planning

What do you think is the average age of cars and trucks on U. S. roads?

11.4 years.

How much do you think the average household spends per year on maintenance of vehicles 6 to 15 years old?

\$550 dollars. Only 37 percent of Americans [say they could afford a \\$500 car repair.](#)

What's Your Car Care Plan?



Regular maintenance



A trustworthy mechanic



Roadside assistance



Car maintenance smartphone app



Emergency car expenses fund

It happens to everyone. You're cruising along in your daily routine, living within your means, when emergency car repairs strike. And they strike hard. Americans are keeping their cars for longer periods – and aging vehicles mean more repair and maintenance costs.

Choose the Right Repair Shop

The American Automobile Association (AAA) offers these tips for picking the right mechanic.

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVHJn9QB8T0>



Create a Maintenance Schedule

In a series of free car care events, it was found 84 percent of cars needed maintenance. [Create a car service schedule](#) to avoid costly repairs down the road.



The True Costs of Car Ownership

Car ownership might be the best option for your transportation needs, but the costs can add up. And these monetary costs can turn into opportunity costs associated with lost savings or investments. Remember, the actual cost of a car is more than your monthly car payment.

Down payment: When buying a car, expect to pay anywhere from 5 percent to 20 percent of the car's purchase price for a down payment. A good rule of thumb is that the more money you can put down, the lower your monthly payments will be. Also, a large down payment helps avoid the risk of being

“upside down” (owing more than a car is worth). This is a one-time cost.

Car loan: The amount of your loan will depend on the price of the car, interest rates, your credit rating and the length of the loan. Keep in mind that, as the purchase price rises, so may the length of time it will take you to pay off the loan. This is a recurring cost until it is paid off.

Sales tax: Sales tax rates will vary depending on where you buy a car. You likely will pay state and local taxes on your purchase — even for a used car. This is a one-time cost.

Car registration fees: Car registration fees are set by each state and are based on the type and age of the vehicle. This is an annual cost. Newer and more expensive cars generally have higher registration fees. Some states also require additional personal property taxes on an annual basis.

Car insurance: Most auto insurance policies are paid every six months for the time you own the car. The costs include coverage for auto liability insurance, medical payments, and collision and comprehensive. Insurers determine auto rates based on four factors:

- Who is driving
- Where you live
- Your accident history
- The type of vehicle

Car maintenance: This includes money for gas, car washes, repairs and routine service (such as rotating the tires and changing the oil). These recurring costs vary over the length of ownership.



Prepare Your Finances to Buy a Car

Before deciding what you want to buy, lease or rent, figure out what fits into your spending plan.

- Use the [Budget Worksheet](#) to investigate your spending habits and identify baseline monthly expenses.
- Define a comfortable car payment:
 - Use your spending history to determine how much money you have available for transportation expenses.
 - If you have a car payment currently, evaluate whether the amount you pay is within your means. Just because you are able to get a loan doesn't mean that you should borrow the most you can. Sometimes having an older car without a car payment relieves stress. In other cases, an older car causes more stress due to the higher risk of unexpected breakdowns.
 - If you do not make a car payment currently, what can you take from your discretionary spending (your "wants") and/or your savings to comfortably afford a car payment?

Remember, you also need to cover insurance, maintenance, gas, tolls, parking and more. When calculating your monthly transportation spending plan, set aside funds for these recurring expenses and emergency car repairs.



Find out how much vehicle your payment will get you with this calculator. [CalcXml: How Much Vehicle Can I Afford Calculator](#)

Learn more about spending plans in SAM's Spending and Saving Basics course.





Car Buying and Leasing Terminology

Get to know these key dealer terms before you start the car buying/leasing process:

Acquisition fee: A fee leasing companies charge to arrange the lease. Usually not negotiable, but can be rolled into the lease agreement. Also known as a bank fee.

Capitalized cost: For leasing, this is the price that will be financed through the lease. It's best to try to negotiate down from the offered price. Your down payment (a cap cost reduction) will lower the cap cost.

Down payment: An initial payment toward the car purchase or lease.

Invoice price: The price the manufacturer charges the dealer for the car. If you know this price before you negotiate for a car, you will know how much the dealer is trying to make on the sale.

Drive-off Fee: Quite literally, the amount you pay the dealer to drive the leased vehicle off the lot. It includes your first month's payment, various fees like the acquisition (bank) fee, tags, registration and title, and may include taxes.

Manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP or sticker price): The price manufacturers suggest the dealers charge for the car. Negotiating down from this is optimal, but may not be possible if the car model is in high demand.

Market value: The price that others in your area have paid for a car. This provides an accurate reflection of what the car is really worth.

Money factor: The leasing term for an interest rate. Convert this to an annual percentage rate (APR) by multiplying the money factor by 2,400.

Residual: At the end of the lease, this is the car's worth. This is what's left over after the car is depreciated during the lease.

Term: The number of months you will pay on the loan or lease.



Sources for Finding and Pricing Cars

- [Edmunds \(Edmunds.com\)](https://www.edmunds.com)
- [Kelley Blue Book \(kbb.com\)](https://www.kbb.com)
- [NADA Guides \(nadaguides.com\)](https://www.nadaguides.com)

Get Your Credit Score Ready

Your credit score will be used to judge your character and your ability to pay back a car loan. That's why it's vital to work toward a good score, so you have it when you need it.

If you apply for new credit, the lender will review your credit score because it shows your history and habits with borrowed money. This is true whether you need a:

- Credit card
- Store card
- Mortgage
- Loan or lease to buy a car

The higher your credit score, the easier it will be for you to obtain credit and qualify for favorable interest rates. The opposite is true if you have a bad credit score.

A good score depends on the scoring model that is used, but a majority of lenders will use your FICO score.

Understand Your Numbers

FICO Score Ranges	What It Means
800+	Exceptional. You likely will have little trouble getting approved for credit and will qualify for the best loan terms.
740 – 799	Very Good. You likely will qualify for better interest rates.
670 – 739	Good. Lenders see you as an acceptable borrower but may require answers to additional questions about your credit history.
580 – 669	Fair. You might have difficulty getting credit. When you are approved, it likely will be at a higher interest rate.
579 and lower	Poor. This reflects some real hardships, such as bankruptcy, or a borrower who has not built up credit yet. Now is the time to make a plan to raise your rating. If you are granted credit, you might need to put down a deposit (using a secured credit card) or pay a fee.

Financing Your Vehicle

You can take charge of your own vehicle financing by getting a loan preapproved through a bank or credit union before you shop. Dealer financing can be convenient and can offer incentives, but do your research ahead of time to see what you qualify for.

Steps for Financing:

1. **Check your credit reports** for accurate information. [AnnualCreditReport.com](https://www.annualcreditreport.com) allows you to view your credit report from three reporting agencies. Correct any inaccurate information before going to your lender.
2. **Approach three banks and/or credit unions.** Focus on the annual percentage rate, fees and length (term) so you know the full cost of your loan.
3. **Get a preapproval from a bank or credit union.** The financial institution will give you paperwork to bring with you to the dealer and the salesperson should know what to do from there.
4. **Shop at three dealers and compare their financing** to your preapproved loan.



Dig deeper with SAM's Credit and Debt Basics Course.

Make a Car Buying Plan

Buying or leasing a car can be a stressful experience if you don't do your homework. The more upfront effort you put into finding the right car at the right price, the better deal you will get in the end.

Determine your needs. How long do you need the vehicle to last? Do you need a new car or do you need a used car just to get around town? Think through your daily routine to determine what type of car would best serve your needs. What are your criteria?

Research your options. Some car models have a history of great performance, others don't. Go online to websites such as [Edmunds](#), [Kelley Blue Book](#) or [NADA Guides](#) to compare costs, read reviews and get free advice about buying new and used cars.

Look for incentives and rebates. Dealers and car manufacturers offer various incentives and rebates to lure customers. A cash rebate amounts to an immediate reduction of the price of the car, whereas a dealer incentive may include no-interest or low-interest financing.

Get quotes. If you're buying from a dealer, shop around. Get quotes from at least three dealers for the car you want (make sure the quotes are for the same model, options, color and features). If you're buying from a private party, make sure you check the [True Market Value](#) from Edmunds or the [Blue Book Value](#) from Kelley Blue Book.

Be flexible. Do not fall in love with any vehicle until you have done a test drive and researched customer reviews online. When dealing with a seller, don't be afraid to walk away.

Consider a car-buying service. A number of organizations such as AAA, warehouse clubs (e.g., Costco), and credit unions offer car-buying services to help people negotiate with car dealers to buy a new car.

Buy or Lease?

Everyone loves to save money, but do you know if leasing is better for you than buying? Would buying used save you money or cost you more in repairs?

Leasing can offer lower payments, but like renting your home, you are not gaining any equity. Some people like that leasing allows them to trade in their car every couple of years for a different one, while others don't like the stress of knowing they will have to give the car back when the lease is up (unless it is a lease-to-own program).

To learn more, read [*Making the Rent or Buy Decision*](#).

Ins and Outs of Leasing

Leasing is a popular alternative to ownership because monthly lease payments often are lower than monthly car payments. And leasing is a short-term prospect, so you can get a more current car under manufacturer's warranty more frequently. But unless you purchase the car at the end of the lease period, you won't own the car. Buying it at the end of a lease may be more costly than if you simply had purchased it at the beginning.

Before you lease a car, consider:

- You may be subject to additional charges at the end of the lease for wear and tear, mileage over the specified amount in your lease agreement, and the difference between the car's market value and residual value.
- You may pay a penalty if you want to terminate the lease agreement early.
- If you wish to purchase at the end of the lease, the purchase price may end up being more than the car is worth.

Leasing a car can shield you from repair and maintenance costs, although this may be offset by higher insurance premiums. If you use the car for business purposes, you can write off the lease payments.

Gap Insurance

If you lease a car, you may opt for gap insurance, which usually is rolled into the lease agreement. This provides coverage for what the insurance will cover and what you still owe on the lease if the car is damaged beyond repair.



Pros and Cons of Buying New

If you buy a new car, you are the owner — after you pay off the car loan. Here are some of the advantages and disadvantages of this choice:

Pros of Buying New

- Once you own the car, you can sell it.
- You can't be charged for exceeding mileage limits.
- As the sole owner, you know the car's performance and maintenance history from the start.
- If you are financing the purchase, chances are interest rates will be lower than for a used model.
- Most likely the car will come with a manufacturer's warranty to cover any problems that may occur in the first few years.

Cons of Buying New

- The minute you drive the car off the lot, it is worth less than before you bought it.
- [Most cars depreciate by about 40 percent in their first three years.](#)
- New cars typically have higher insurance rates and higher motor vehicle registration fees.
- All maintenance and repairs (outside of warranted items) are yours to pay.



Once your car is paid for, save your monthly payment amount for yourself. It's a good way to start the down payment for your next car purchase or to build up emergency car funds.



Pros and Cons of Buying Used

Buying a used car can be risky. There are a lot of unknowns, but they can be offset by lower pricing. Here are some of the pros and cons of buying used:

Pros of Buying Used

- Buying a used car will cost you less upfront than a new car.
- Used cars bought through a manufacturer's certified preowned program are subject to inspection, making the manufacturer responsible for certain repairs.
- Insurance premiums will be lower than those for a new car.
- You are the owner (after paying off the car loan).

Cons of Buying Used

- If you buy a lemon — a car that looks fine on the outside, but turns out to have hidden issues — you can run up repair bills quickly.
- Buying a used car from a private party (individual) will not include warranties or service programs.
- Your interest rate for financing may be higher than buying a new model.



Evaluating a Used Car

When purchasing a used car, avoid buying a lemon by getting as much information as possible.

- **Request ownership history.** Note the mileage on the odometer and review maintenance records (if available).
- **Check for body damage.** Inspect the car closely for dents, dings, chipped paint, scratches on the body and obvious repairs.
- **Test drive it carefully.** How does the car drive? Do the brakes work well? Does the car pull in any direction? Are there any unusual noises? Pay close attention and make note of any questions you have.
- **Have the car inspected by a qualified mechanic.** When buying any used vehicle, an independent mechanical inspection by a qualified mechanic can help spot red flags.
- **Request a vehicle history report.** Request a vehicle history report from an independent reporting service. A report can be ordered online for a small fee from companies such as CARFAX or AutoCheck, which checks the vehicle identification number (VIN) and title history to determine if the car has been salvaged, flooded or rebuilt. It also will report on odometer fraud and major problems in the past.
- **Request a copy of the car's service record.** Most used-car dealers can provide this to you. If you're buying from a private party, ask if the owner has kept maintenance records that you can review.
- **Read the fine print.** Be sure you know what's covered in the warranty and for how long. The warranty may mean you won't have to pay for specific repairs for the life of the warranty, so reviewing the terms is worth the effort.

Avoid Buying a Salvaged or Stolen Car

Use the [free VINCheck at the National Insurance Crime Bureau \(NICB\)](https://www.nicb.org/vincheck) to see if the used car has been declared salvaged or stolen. Also check these signs for water damage:

- Mildew, debris, or silt
- Rust
- Water stains
- Dampness or moldy odors
- Moisture on inside of instrument panels

YouTube URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQg_2vf77QA



How to Avoid Buying a Flooded Car: Podcast



Insurance Information Institute



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0



Be a Savvy Negotiator

Choose one statement from below to see how you feel when it comes to negotiating:

- ☐ I love to negotiate. It's fun and it makes me feel like I got a good deal.
- ☐ I use my negotiation skills well when I have to.
- ☐ I'm not comfortable negotiating, and I don't know if I do it well enough.
- ☐ I don't negotiate.

Your approach and attitude toward negotiating can influence your success in the car buying process. If you view negotiating as a win-win proposition — meaning each of you gets something out of the process — then you are more likely to feel good as you close the deal.

Before you approach a car seller about buying or leasing a car, look at your past performance as a negotiator and brush up your skills.



Shop Around: Get Three Quotes Before Buying

The first time you meet the seller (whether a dealer or individual), you want to gather information about pricing, and not necessarily buy the car.

When you speak with a car seller, you need to know some pricing terminology so you don't start negotiating at the high end. In particular, keep these three terms in mind:

- **Invoice price:** The price the manufacturer charges the dealer for the car. If you know this price before you negotiate for a car, you will know how much the dealer is trying to make on the sale.
- **Manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP or sticker price):** The price manufacturers suggest that dealers charge for the car. Negotiating down from this is optimal, but may not be possible if the car model is in high demand.
- **Market value:** The price that others in your area have paid for the car. Tools such as [Edmunds True Market Value tool](#) and [Kelley Blue Book's Price Advisor Tool](#) show the "fair market range" for the vehicle you want including real data on what other customers in your area have paid for that vehicle in recent months.

Ideally, a dealer wants to start with the highest price – the MSRP. But ultimately, your goal is to get as close to the market value as you can, and less if possible. Shop around and get to know the market in your area before you make plans to negotiate.



Practice Your Negotiation Skills

You may not be a natural negotiator, but here are some ways to increase your skills:

- **Be pleasant.** The seller has a job to sell you a car. No need to treat him or her like a villain.
- **Slow down.** Don't rush to show how anxious you are to buy the car.
- **Know what you want and explain it.** If you sense that the seller is trying to move you away from your criteria, walk back to your research and your list of needs.
- **Know what you can afford.** It can help to be preapproved through your bank or credit union ahead of time.
- **Keep each transaction separate.** Don't get caught up in numbers for trade-ins. Negotiate the price of the car separate from the value of your trade-in and loan financing arrangements
- **Keep in control of your time.**
 - Limit the amount of time you give the seller to get information.
 - Have a time frame for making your purchase. Tell the seller when you intend to purchase a car. This will prevent the "what will it take to get you into this car today" discussion.
 - Be respectful. Of course the seller is able to take money off to make the deal right now. That's the job he or she does. Explain that you have a time frame in mind and will get back to him or her in that period.

Car Buying Don'ts

The [Credit Union National Association](#) makes these suggestions for what not to do when buying a car:

- Don't buy a car on your first visit.
- Don't give away the price or price range you're willing to pay.
- Don't go there on an empty stomach.
- Don't get hung up on superficial things like color; focus on the performance and driving experience.



Seal the Deal Without Breaking the Bank

Once you've successfully negotiated, you aren't finished. Before you jump into your new car, understand these key items that can impact your wallet:

- **Other fees you may pay.** These include sales tax, registration and documentation fees (for preparing documentation). Documentation fees offer a way for car dealers to pack extra expenses on to your price. Some states regulate the amount that can be charged, but often you can negotiate this fee. Dealer fees and fees for things like dealer prep, shipping, and advertising on top of what the manufacturer charges the seller should be negotiated. Make sure to ask about all dealer fees and what they are for.
- **Warranties and maintenance packages.**
- **Aftermarket dealer add-ons.** These are items like security alarms, all-weather floor mats, technology upgrades and various other optional things that the dealer offers on top of the car price. Decline add-ons or negotiate to lower the price if these features are not valuable to you.
- **Existing miles.** If you are looking to buy a brand new car that was used for test drives or has more than 300 miles on it, use that mileage to negotiate a reduction in price.

Adjust Your Driving to Plug Spending Leaks



1 in 6

Americans gets a speeding ticket every year.



\$150

The average cost of a speeding ticket with court costs.

Source: [USA Today](#)

Even if you can afford the speeding ticket, consider the other financial impacts:

- Speeding tickets raise your insurance premium.
- Accelerating quickly and then slowing decreases gas mileage.
- Speeding and causing an accident can put you in the hot seat for injuries to others or yourself.
- Points on your driving record can lead to the suspension of your license and take away your ability to drive to work.

Distracted and Impaired Driving

Distracted driving and driving while impaired are constantly in the news. The worst part is that it isn't just a habit for teenagers — adults do it too.



3,328

Number of people killed in crashes involving a distracted driver.



421,000

Number of people injured in crashes involving a distracted driver.



10,076

Number of people killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes.

Source: [Centers for Disease Control](#) and Prevention

Approximately 660,000 drivers use cellphones or electronic devices while driving at any given daylight moment, according to the [National Occupant Protection Use Survey \(NOPUS\)](#).

Glancing at a text message while driving may seem harmless, especially if you're not answering. After all, it's only a glance to see who the text is from, right?

Check Your Knowledge

- How long does it take to glance away from the road and to your device if you receive a text?
Answer: 4.6 seconds.
- Driving 55 mph, how far can you travel in the time it takes to glance at a text while driving?
Answer: 370 feet, or the length of one football field.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAQzQgcnsEs>





Driving While Impaired

Impaired driving doesn't necessarily mean drinking alcohol. It can mean any use of drugs like marijuana, cocaine or even prescribed pharmaceutical drugs that impair your ability to safely navigate a moving vehicle. Of course, most of the suggestions below address drinking and driving, but they also can apply to anything else that impairs driving. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the following:

- Designate a nondrinking driver when you are with a group of friends.
- Take keys away from friends who have been drinking.
- Call a taxi or get a ride home — you can get your car when you're sober.
- Remind guests to plan ahead and designate a sober driver if you host a party.



Aggressive Driving

Aggressive driving doesn't necessarily mean yelling or gesturing at other drivers. Some bad behaviors include:

- Following too closely behind another vehicle
- Weaving from one lane to another
- Speeding
- Ignoring traffic signs and caution areas

On the low side, these kinds of actions can get you a traffic violation. But they also can involve you in an incident with another driver or pedestrian who can hire a lawyer to sue for damages, costing you money, time and emotional fatigue.

Seat Belt Use



\$50 billion

Nonfatal crash injuries resulted in more than \$50 billion in lifetime medical and work loss costs.

Source: [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

According to the [CDC](#), wearing a seat belt reduces your chance of a crash-related injury or death by nearly half. Yet adults under 35 are less likely to wear seatbelts than those over 35. Although many states now require seat belt use, it is wise to:

- Set an example for your family by using a seat belt on every trip.
- Properly buckle children into whatever restraint system is appropriate for their age, height and weight. (Children under 12 should be in the back seat.)
- Have children sit in the middle back seat of larger vehicles, if possible.

YouTube URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psdkl0lr77g>



Pedestrian Safety



735

Pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes in the United States.

[Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)]

Even if you are not driving, you need to monitor your habits to stay safe on any road or walkway. The populations most at risk are older adults and children, followed by alcohol-impaired pedestrians.

The CDC makes these recommendations for preventing pedestrian injuries related to vehicle crashes:

- Make yourself visible, especially at night. Carry flashlights or wear reflective clothes.
- Use designated crosswalks and follow signals for safe crossing times.
- Use sidewalks or paths. If you must walk on the road, use the shoulder and walk facing traffic.

And finally, look up from your phone or mobile device while walking.

MAKE YOUR PLAN



Set SMART Transportation Goals

Now that you know what your acceptable transportation options are, focus on the goals you have to set to make your top choice happen. You can use these questions and examples to help guide your goal setting:



Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time-bound

Setting SMART Transportation Goals		Examples
Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What exactly must be accomplished to make this transportation option work? Who should be involved? Why do you want to accomplish this goal? 	<p><i>My old car is too old to keep fixing, so I want to buy a new car. I need to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Calculate the monthly transportation costs I can afford without stress.</i> <i>Shop around for three quotes.</i> <i>Meet with a lender.</i>
Measurable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will you know when you've achieved this goal? What needs to change to meet this goal? How many actions will this take? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I haven't had a car payment in years, so I will aim to cut my spending by \$200 per month.</i> <i>I will meet with a financial coach this month to see how my credit looks.</i>
Attainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have what you need to achieve this goal? Is the goal reasonable? Will the actions you take bring success? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I will track my spending habits for the next month and set aside the amount of a car payment to try it out before I commit to a new car.</i> <i>I will request my credit report to help me understand my finances better.</i>

Relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this goal worthwhile at this time in your life? • What meaning does the goal have for you? Is this just something that others think you should do? • If you pursue this goal, does it take away from other goals you have? • Are you willing to commit to achieving this goal? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A new car will ease my stress about potential breakdowns and repairs.</i> • <i>I will adjust my driving habits to try public transportation at least twice a week for the next month to save on gas and wear and tear on my current car.</i>
Time-bound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your deadline? • When do you need to take action? • What can be done today? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I will aim to save \$2,000 over the next six months for a down payment.</i> • <i>I will meet with three potential lenders in the next month.</i>

TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES



Are you in a transportation crisis? Or maybe you're just looking to go deeper into this topic? There are many free and low-cost resources available to help you. Here are a few:

2-1-1

Just as you would call 9-1-1 in an emergency, you can call 2-1-1 (www.211.org) from anywhere in North America using your phone or computer to speak to a specialist in your community who can help you find a variety of free services including:

- Disaster and emergency help
 - Housing and food assistance
 - Employment and education opportunities
- Help starting a business
 - Help for special groups such as veterans and victims of domestic abuse

American Public Transit Association

Use [this calculator](#) to see how much you could save using public transportation.

National Association of Insurance Commissioners

This [interactive map](#) shows contact information for state insurance departments.

Insurance Information Institute

Check [auto insurance responsibility limits](#) by state and find insurance providers in your area.

Car Cost Estimators and Buying Resources

- [Nada Guides](#)
- [Kelley Blue Book](#)
- [Edmunds](#)

InsureU

General [insurance information](#) including resources for teen drivers.

CONGRATULATIONS!



You have completed the Transportation course. Check out SAM's other free courses to continue your personal finance journey:

SAM Money Basics

These topics form the foundation that underlies most financial decisions. Take all the Basics courses, or jump around to get a refresher based on the choices you face right now.

- Credit and Debt
- Employment
- Insurance
- Investing
- Employment
- Spending and Saving

Additional Courses

Explore these SAM courses to develop personalized plans in the following areas:

- My Emergency Fund Plan
- My Housing Plan

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