Occupational Therapy Australia



Occupational therapy and the older driver

Driving is an important part of many people's lives. It provides a method to independently access the community whether that be for appointments, visiting family or social engagement and is thus an important way for people to stay connected to their communities.

Changes experienced with aging may impact the ability to continue to drive safely. These changes might include vision loss, deterioration of balance and strength, loss of confidence or anxiety around driving, reduced reaction times or cognitive decline.

Occupational therapists can work with older drivers to consider the factors that might be making driving more difficult. People having trouble with getting in and out of the car, difficulty with comfort and posture in the car seat or difficulty with upper limb strength may benefit from seeing a generalist occupational therapist.

Certain diagnoses may trigger a review of a person's driver's license. In these circumstances, driver trained occupational therapists can conduct these assessments. Driver trained occupational therapists have received specialist training and education that allows them to conduct comprehensive assessments and provide education, training and recommendations around vehicle alterations to support continued safe driving.

Older people or their families and friends can seek the advice of an occupational therapist or driver trained occupational therapist if they have concerns. Both generalist occupational therapists and driver trained occupational therapists can also support family and friends by providing advice on the safe transportation of an older person in a vehicle whether that includes the use of equipment or not.

Additionally, if driving is no longer a safe option, occupational therapists can consider driving alternatives including use of public and private transport options or the possible use of mobility devices.

Use the 'Find an OT' search on the Occupational Therapy Australia website to locate an occupational therapist or driver trained occupational therapist in your area.

To access an occupational therapist:
Contact My Aged Care **1800 200 422**
Speak to your GP to obtain a referral under Medicare or DVA

To find out more about occupational therapy and to find an OT working with older people near you, visit otaus.com.au/find-an-ot

5 / 340 Gore St. Fitzroy VIC 3065 1300 682 878 otaus.com.au