

Observation



Questions are often received after an MLR training day regarding driving technique and vehicle set up, as it can take time for the new skills and techniques to become part of your driving system. Here at CAT we have realised a helpful ear on the end of the phone or advice through the PM facility on the MLR forum and email is appreciated by the members. This edition will focus on observation....

Have you ever considered where you are looking when driving on circuit? I am looking at the road ahead I hear you all shout, the answer is obvious! or is it? Those members who have trained with us will have experienced the exercises and coaching techniques that raise your awareness of the importance of sound observational skills when driving at speed.

Every CAT Driver Training session will include time spent working on where we are looking when driving. Be your objectives improving road skills or reducing your lap time, the message is the same - you must drive with

a long focal point. It is without doubt, a core element to safe progress.

Drivers often visit us to regain their confidence after a mishap on circuit - sometimes it can be as simple as an unexplained spin. Have you ever had one of those heart stopping moments? My first question whatever the incident is always where were you looking?

Our focal point and steering direction are united, the partnership is unbreakable. We can demonstrate when training, through simple exercises that where you look is where you steer. Let's put some facts into the discussion.

At 100 MPH we are travelling at 44 metres per second, 140 MPH we are travelling over the ground at 62 metres per second. As we make progress at circuit speed, our objective has to be, to aim our focal point (where we are looking) at the Limit Point: the imaginary point the left and the right hand side of the road or circuit ahead of us converge.

The optimum technique is completed by scanning back towards the bonnet for hazards and position, not as we often do from the bonnet forward. Our brains need to know where we are heading to. If my focal point is short I will find it hard to single input steer.

Unnecessary steering input through a turn will reduce available grip. The psychological effect of looking short through a turn, is a nervous feel for the driver. Your brain wants to know where you are heading in order for your hands to deliver the correct steering input.

Ok you are looking ahead, but what happens if your Evo gets a little out of shape through a turn? My experience is survival instincts take over, and that can present us with a problem! There is now a conflict taking place. The fight is between what your brain wants you to do, and what engineering logic dictates you must do. This battle takes place

in a nanosecond, but feels like an eternity. My brain wants me to prepare for impact and compels me to look at the point of impact.

Overcome the brains subconscious response and keep looking long through the corner and you may be surprised at the result. If you think through the logic of looking ahead, even if you feel you are leaving the circuit, all becomes clear. If I maintain a long focal point my brain has further to triangulate the coordinates of where I am heading. My counter steer and subsequent correction will be accurate and precise. If I momentarily look towards the point of impact, be that a gravel

trap or barrier, my brain has less of a distance to calculate steering input. The result is often an exaggerated over correction and a trip to the scenery.

The throttle pedal also plays a part in our safe recovery, but let's save that for next time.

Safe driving

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