



Welcome to the May edition of the Health & Safety newsletter. This upcoming long weekend is the unofficial start of summer like weather. Let's hope the weather cooperates and everyone can get out enjoy themselves. This month we give you some valuable spring driving tips, we talk about a simple and efficient exercise for all, plus another great recipe from Vereena. Have a great month everyone!

### TOP TIPS FOR SAFE SUMMER DRIVING

The sun is out, the air is warm, and after a long cold winter and a slow wet spring, you're ready to get on the road again. Before you hit the road, remember that with the change in seasons you need to keep your driving record clean and your insurance record claim free to make sure you don't see an increase in your car insurance rates when it's time to renew. Here are some tips (and warnings) that will make you a safer driver this summer.

#### Summer Roads Are Busier Than Winter Roads

Everyone's looking to get out on the road and enjoy the summer weather. This means increased traffic on roads everywhere, including tourists and out-of-towners. Taking extra precautions to drive safely will help you to get through the summer season incident free. With increased traffic volume, safe driving practices become particularly important.

Additionally, watch for cyclists and motorcyclists on the roadways. Though they've likely had their bikes parked all winter, fair weather will bring them out on the roads, and these smaller, sometimes faster moving vehicles are just one more thing to look out for. As a motorist, you may not be expecting them, and their skills could be rusty from a winter of not riding – so be alert and avoid an accident.

Unlike other seasons where rush hour tends to be the busiest time on the roads, summer sees an increase in traffic on weekends, as people head to the beach, the cottage, or other popular leisure destinations. In many cases these drivers pose more of a risk, as they're excited about their destination, and often have more cargo and more passengers than a regular commuter. Common sense measures to stay safe on crowded roadways include staying calm and being courteous to other drivers while you're behind the wheel.

#### Space is Limited

Summer is also construction season, so higher traffic volumes are being squeezed onto roads that are being reduced to allow for maintenance, construction and expansion. With road workers out on our roads, staying alert is particularly important, so pay attention in construction zones, where speed limits are often reduced, and traffic can come to an immediate stand still without much notice.

#### Pack It In

When you're packing your car for a road trip or vacation keep safety at the top of your mind. Many drivers sacrifice their field of vision, including blocking their mirrors to squeeze in those extra supplies. Don't jeopardize your safety on the roads by over-stuffing your vehicle. This could mean using additional space on the exterior of your vehicle, or towing a small utility trailer. Both are safe options, as long as you remember to properly secure all items – including tarps!





### Buckle Up

You hear it time and again, but the easiest way to increase your chances of survival in the case of an accident is to wear your seat belt. This isn't just necessary as the driver, but for every passenger in your vehicle too. Seat belts really do save lives, and being caught without one can cost you on your insurance too! You won't qualify for [cheap insurance rates](#) if you get caught without your seat belt – especially if it's more than once. Not wearing a seat belt puts you at an increased risk for more severe injuries or even fatality in the event of an accident. [Insurance companies](#) know this, and your insurance rates will reflect this. Remember that any passenger under the age of 16 riding in your vehicle who isn't properly secured is your responsibility, and therefore you will be charged on their behalf.

### SQUAT FOR LIFE

As babies and toddlers, we were able to squat for hours. It is actually considered a resting position in many cultures. A person's ability (or inability) to squat is a good indication of his or her physical condition. One must not only possess a flexible body, but also have well-developed leg and back muscles. Although we were exceptionally good at it long ago, the lack of practice in squatting could render a person incapable of squatting, or to maintain the squatting position for more than a minute. Full squatting involves resting one's weight on the feet with the buttocks resting on the backs of the calves. Most western adults cannot place their heels flat on the ground when squatting because of shortened Achilles tendons largely caused by habitually sitting on chairs or seats and wearing shoes with heels (especially high heels). For this reason the squatting position is usually not sustainable for more than a few minutes as heels-up squatting is a less stable position than heels-down squatting. With continual practice, we can get back to the full squat position we were used to as a child.

### Top 8 Benefits of Squats

1. **Builds Muscle in Your Entire Body.** Squats not only build leg muscles but they also create an anabolic environment, which promotes body-wide muscle building. In fact, when done properly, squats are so intense that they trigger the release of testosterone and human growth hormone in your body, which are vital for muscle growth and will also help to improve muscle mass when you train other areas of your body aside from your legs.
2. **Functional Exercise Makes Real-Life Activities Easier.** Functional exercises are those that help your body to perform real-life activities, as opposed to simply being able to operate pieces of gym equipment. Squats are one of the best functional exercises. When you perform squats, you build muscle and help your muscles work more efficiently, as well as promote mobility and balance. All of these benefits translate into your body moving more efficiently in the real world too.
3. **Burn More Fat.** One of the most time-efficient ways to burn more calories is actually to gain more muscle. For every pound of additional muscle you gain, your body will burn an additional 50-70 calories per day. So, if you gain 10 pounds of muscle, you will automatically burn 500-700 more calories per day than you did before.
4. **Maintain Mobility and Balance.** Strong legs are crucial for staying mobile as you get older, and squats are phenomenal for increasing leg strength. They also work out your core, stabilizing muscles, which will help you to maintain balance, while also improving the communication between your brain and your muscle groups, which





helps prevent falls – which is incidentally the number one way to prevent bone fractures versus consuming mega-dose calcium supplements and bone drugs.

5. Prevent Injuries. Most athletic injuries involve weak stabilizer muscles, ligaments and connective tissues, which squats help strengthen. They also help prevent injury by improving your flexibility (squats improve the range of motion in your ankles and hips) and balance, as noted above.
6. Boost Your Sports Performance – Jump Higher and Run Faster. Squatting strength has been linked to athletic ability and therefore has helped athletes run faster and jump higher. That's why this exercise is part of virtually every professional athlete's training program.
7. Tone Your Backside, Abs and Entire Body. Few exercises work as many muscles as the squat, so it is an excellent multi-purpose activity useful for toning and tightening your behind, abs and of course your legs.
8. Help with Waste Removal. Squats improve the pumping of body fluids, aiding in removal of waste and delivery of nutrition to all tissues, including organs and glands. They're also useful for improved movement of feces through your colon and more regular bowel movements.

Try these tips to perform a proper squat:

1. Warm up.
2. Stand with your feet just over shoulder width apart.
3. . Keep your back in a neutral position, and keep your knees centered over your feet.
4. Slowly bend your knees, hips and ankles, lowering until you reach a 90-degree angle.
5. Return to starting position – repeat 15-20 times, for 2-3 sets for beginners (do this two or three times a week). As you practice over several weeks you'll be able to slowly lower yourself to full squat.
6. Breathe in as you lower; breathe out as you return to starting position.

Squats have been criticized for being destructive to your knees, but research shows that when done properly squats actually improve knee stability and strengthen connective tissue. Get your trainer to watch to make sure your form is correct to prevent injury. Go ahead, squat!





**RECIPE OF THE MONTH – TOMATO, AVOCADO AND MOZZARELLA SALAD**

**Ingredients**

- 2 avocados
- 2 – 3 tomatoes
- 1 ball fresh mozzarella cheese
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp. basil
- salt & pepper

