

May

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Wheels



Photo by Sjoerd Witteveen

Your first priority while driving is the road. Pull over to the side when talking on a cell phone.

## Avoid road hypnosis – take frequent stops while driving

What do hypnosis, pets and phones have in common?

Not much unless you're driving a vehicle – then all three can pose a safety hazard.

✓ Road hypnosis is the feeling you get when you've been driving too long.

Especially with high performance vehicles, you can speed up without even realizing it and your attention can become numbed.

Besides risking a speeding ticket, you could be putting yourself and others on the road at risk.

### Tips

✓ Make frequent stops. Open the windows to get fresh air. Turn the radio up. Crank up the air conditioning. Sing or talk to yourself. Do whatever it takes to keep you alert.

### Other distractions

✓ Pets should never be

loose in the car, even on short trips.

Always keep them in a harness that attaches to the seatbelt (check your local pet store) or, depending on their size, you can also use a carrying case.

This can either go on the floor of the back seat or tied

### Car phone users don't like to admit it, but talking on the phone can affect their concentration

securely to the seat.

✓ Remember – never put pets in the front seat.

If you have to break suddenly or if you are in an accident, the front is where a pet can cause the most damage.

✓ Your first priority when you're driving is the road.

While car phones can be a handy tool on the road – especially if you are in an accident or in some kind of trouble – they shouldn't be the cause of the trouble.

✓ Car phone users don't

like to admit it, but talking on the phone can affect their concentration.

Your speed is more likely to waver and you may become so involved in the conversation that your driving goes on auto-pilot.

That means you're less likely to notice possible hazards like other vehicles or pedestrians.

✓ If you find yourself in a long conversation, or one that requires a lot of concentration, pull over to the side of the road or into a parking lot.

✓ If the road conditions or traffic demand your full concentration, stay off the phone entirely.

✓ If you absolutely must talk on the phone while driving, choose one of the speaker phone models, so you can safely keep both hands on the wheel.

## Have well-stocked vehicle in case of emergency

It's remarkable how many motorists depend on the kindness of strangers with jumper cables, even as their own backseats overflow with umbrellas and coffee cups.

For those who spend time on the road, an accumulation of gear is inevitable. The car becomes a rolling tote bag, filled with the things you need to be comfortable and, presumably, with the items you need to be safe.

Blankets, pillows, maps, a cell phone, a first-aid kit and a spare tire – all these things need a place in the car.

A well-stocked vehicle can make traveling move comfortable. But there is a more pressing reason to organize a car – your life may depend on it.

Six per cent of fatal crashes investigated by police officers show inattentiveness contributed to the crash. Driving demands your full attention. A car with clutter floating around can be distracting and increases your chances of crashing.

Safety should be the first concern in organizing a car.

A driver's survival kit should be stored in the trunk along with a spare tire and jack. To keep things from rolling around, organize the contents of the kit in a plastic milk crate or in a heavy-canvas bag that fits in the middle of your spare tire.

### In the trunk

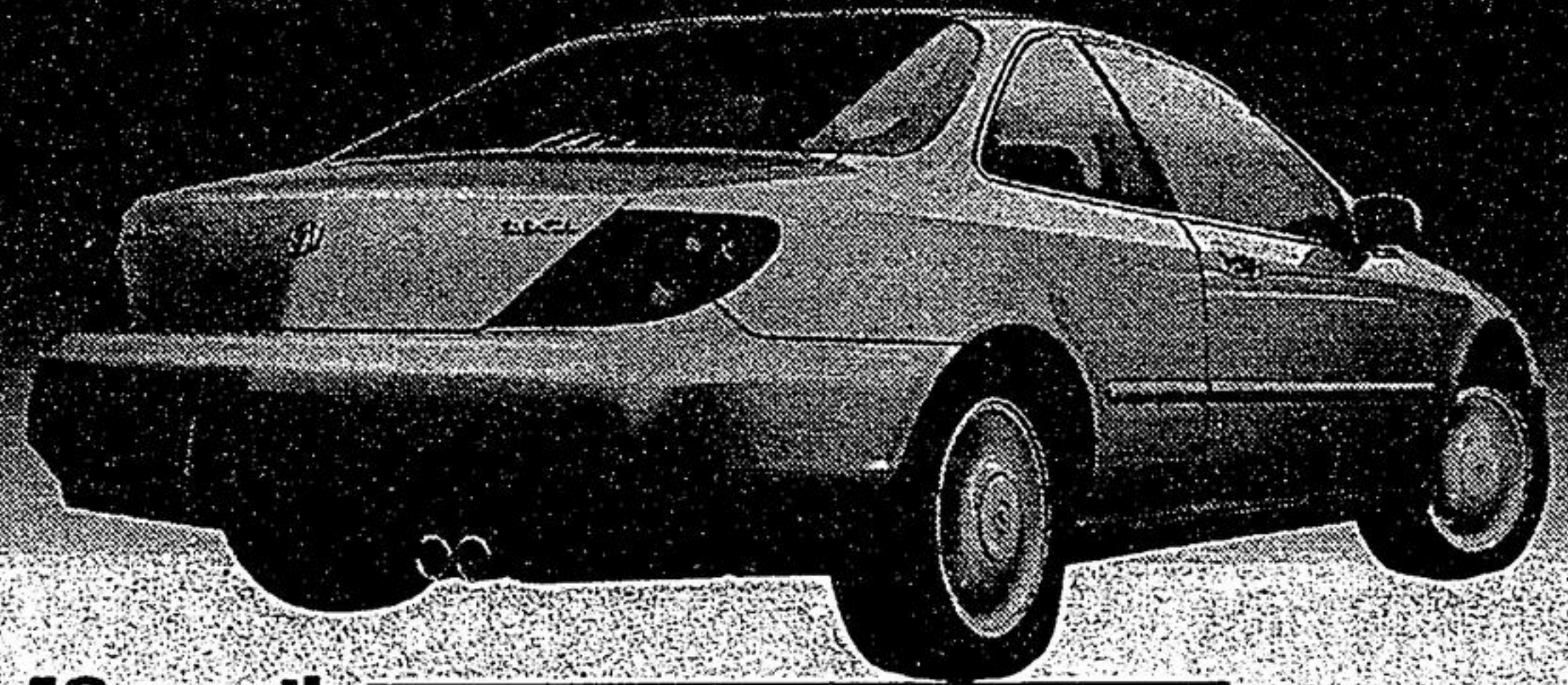
- jumper cables
- flashlight and fresh batteries
- tire jack
- flare or reflector triangle to warn oncoming traffic of breakdown

- first-aid kit
- fire extinguisher
- work gloves
- windshield washer fluid

### In glove compartment

- maps or street atlas
- owner's manual
- repair log in which you record every service performed on your car
- multi-use pocketknife
- car registration (or copy)
- sunglasses

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