


# FIRST GEAR

## NEW DRIVER NEWSLETTER

Presented by  ROADPRO.  
FAMILY OF BRANDS

JUNE 2021

# 10 Tips for Staying Fit

Sitting for hours at a time is part of being a trucker, and it can take a toll on your body and your mind. But developing a few healthy habits will help you stay fit no matter how long you are behind the wheel.

These ten tips are proven ways to stay fit on the road:

- 1** ***Make the Most of Your Stops***  
Whether it is a 30-minute break or a 10-hour reset, try to fit in some time to move. Park farther away from the building and take at least 5 minutes for a brisk walk or 15 minutes if you can swing it. Build on that 5 minutes and try to get your heart rate up. This will also help you stay more alert while driving.
- 2** ***Use resistance bands or suspension trainers***  
While there is not much room to store weights in your truck, bands and suspension trainers are light and compact and can be used just about anywhere. Resistance bands help build strength, and each band exerts a particular amount of force to your muscles when stretched. They are a great way to improve joint mobility and flexibility.
- 3** ***Stop by a gym***  
Find a local gym or community center that may have a big parking lot, and they might even let you park overnight. You can also get a membership at a national gym and have a go-to club wherever you venture. TA Petro and Pilot have also added gyms to many of their facilities, so take advantage of them when you can to get in a brief workout no matter the weather.
- 4** ***Go for a morning run, a swim, or take a hike***  
Many of the travel centers and truck stops also have trails nearby. Consider taking a 15-minute run to get your heart rate up. Maybe swimming is your thing, and there may be a public lake nearby or even a community pool. Swimming is a great way to stay fit and easy on your joints. If you happen to have that extra time while waiting for your next load, find the nearest hiking trail and experience the area – get out and see the sights and get your steps in too.
- 5** ***Workout videos***  
If you have a laptop or TV, workout videos are like having a personal trainer on the road with you. Download videos in advance, or stream them when you find Wi-Fi.
- 6** ***Eating healthy***  
Staying fit isn't just about moving—your diet plays a significant role. Cook in your cab, when you can, to not only control calories but costs too. RoadPro offers many 12-volt cooking appliances to cook up a healthy meal. There are also many trucking cooking groups on Facebook that post recipes. You can also find more recipes for RoadPro's 12-volt cookware at [www.roadprobrands.com](http://www.roadprobrands.com) or by joining RoadPro's [Brake Time](#) community.
- 7** ***Wear a fitness tracker***  
This tech helps you keep track of how many steps you take in a day. The recommended amount is 10,000 steps daily, and that can be hard when you are trucking – but try to get as much movement as you can, even if it is stepping in place inside your cab when you stop for the night or walking around your truck when you stop.
- 8** ***Drinking water***  
You will hear time and again that drinking water is essential in staying fit. Being well hydrated is vital for your health, and while you may be concerned that consuming more water will also lead to more bathroom breaks, try to find the right balance. Try drinking 8 to 10 ounces of water when you first wake up. By the time you are ready to leave for your route, you would have used the bathroom, cleansing your body and hydrating.
- 9** ***Get your rest***  
Driving a truck is not an easy career, and the lack of sleep makes it more challenging to meet the job demands. Make sure you get the proper amount of rest and that you take time for yourself when you can. Getting the right amount of sleep will go a long way for you physically and stave off the risk of infection, diabetes, or high blood pressure.
- 10** ***Staying mentally fit***  
It's not only about physical activity, eating right, and getting the proper sleep. Staying mentally fit is also essential. Find something you like to do during your downtime. Maybe it is listening to music or even playing music, watching a favorite movie, reading a good book, or exploring a nearby attraction. Take time to learn a new language, skill, or take up a new hobby. Do something for your mental well-being to keep you in a positive state of mind.

We hope you will find these tips helpful and wish you smooth roads, blue skies and the very best of health. ●



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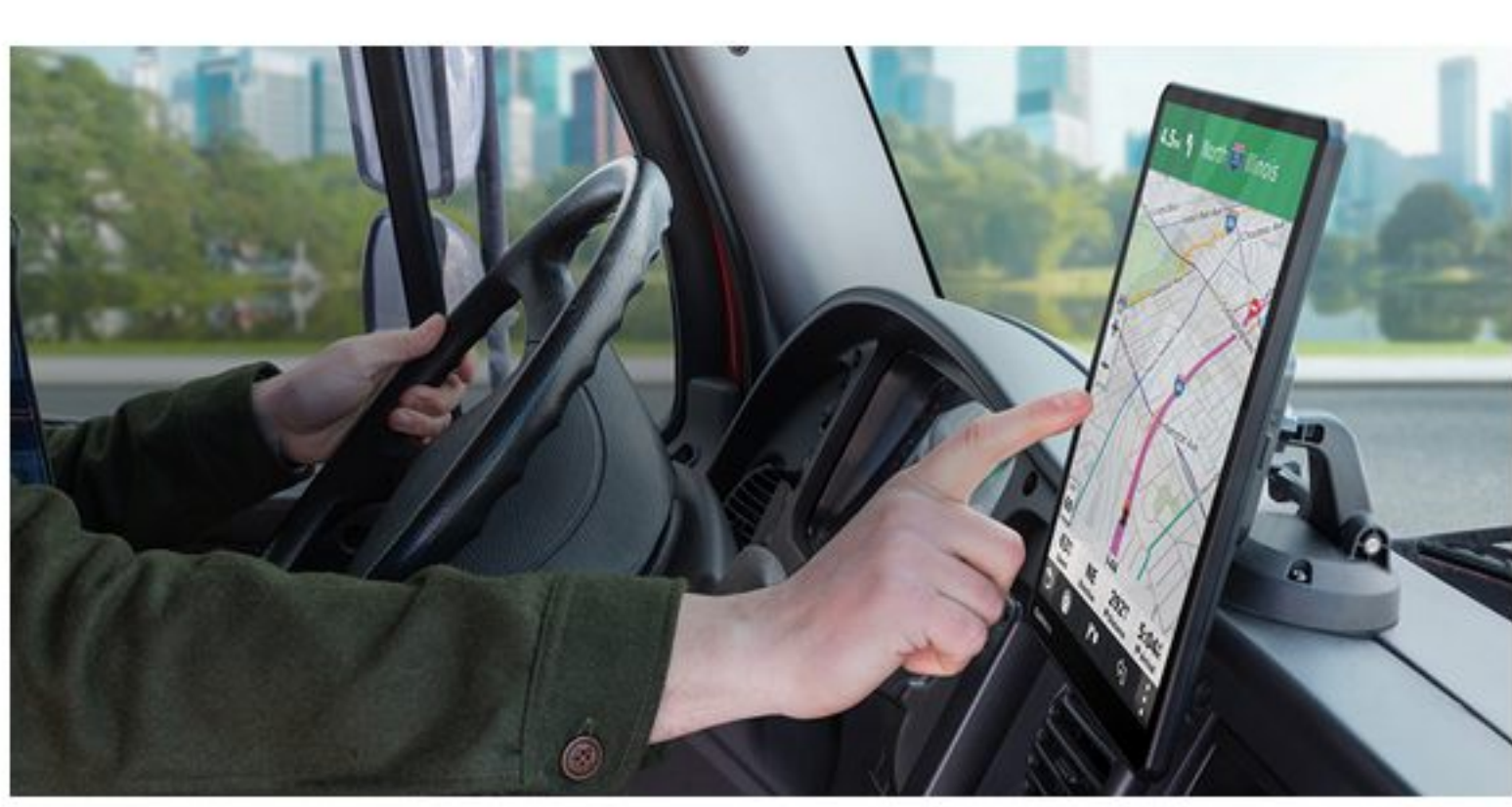


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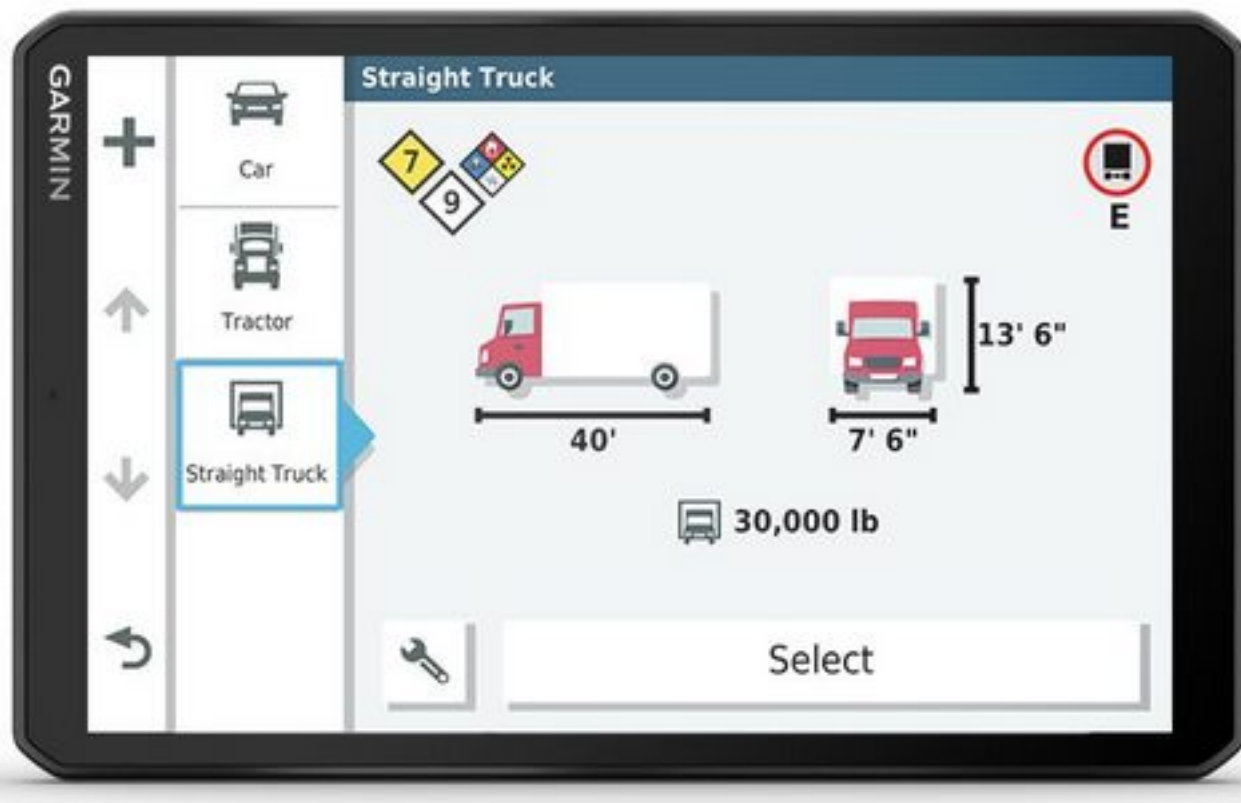
## Navigating the Open Road

This past year has proven the importance of over-the-road drivers and the contribution they make in all of our lives. If you're one of them, you know that driving for a living is different from getting behind the wheel for a road trip or family vacation. You know that GPS navigators are great tools to have on the road — no matter what kind of driving you do. But if you're like so many long-haul drivers still relying on GPS systems designed for passenger vehicles, you're missing out on a bunch of trucker-tailored features and capabilities that could be making your life easier and better. Is it time for an upgrade?



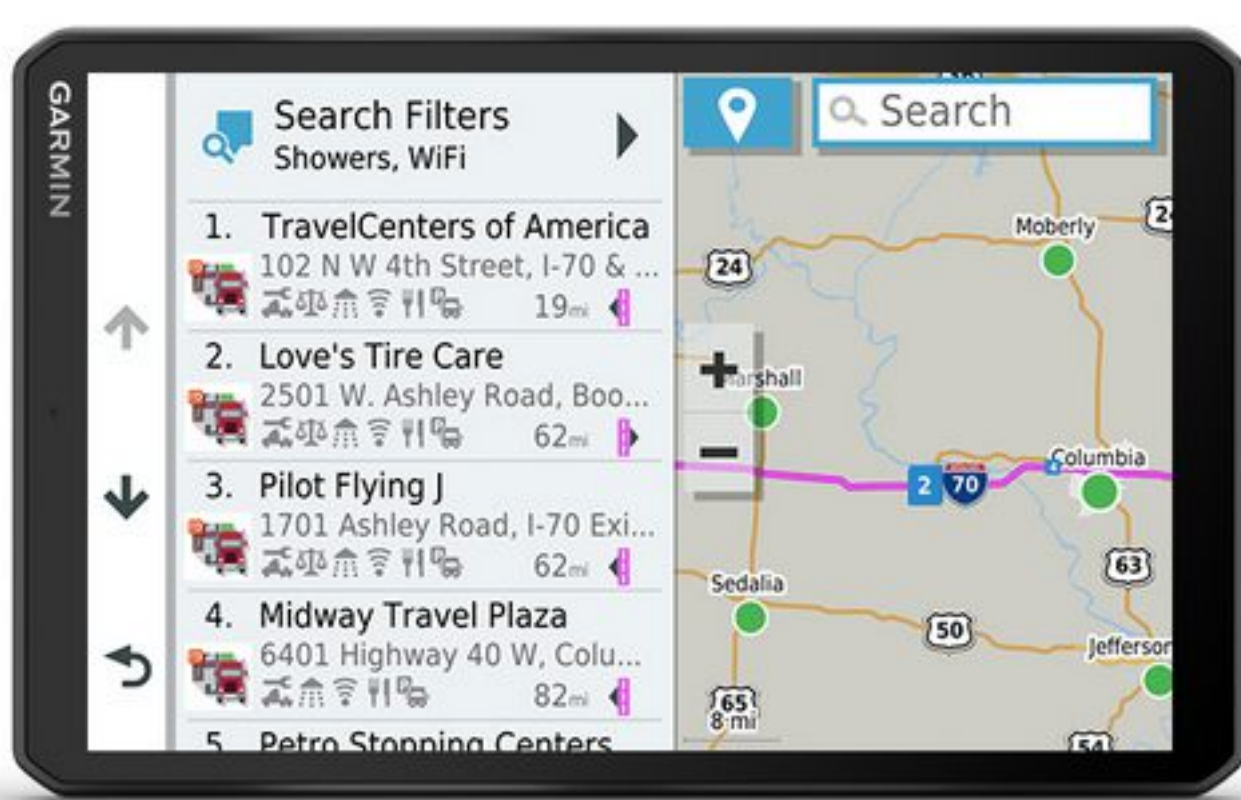
## Bigger Screens, Easier Viewing

The bigger they come, the easier they are to see and interpret. Instead of squinting to read that small portable car navigator across a big truck cab — or trying to hold it close enough to see while you drive — try out options in 6", 7", 8" or 10" formats with super-sharp touchscreen displays and clear, easy-to-read maps. Plus, the 8" and 10" displays typically offer both portrait and landscape orientation options, so you can position them whichever way gives you the best viewability in your cab.



## Custom Truck Routing

The best route for a car may not be the best for a truck hauling freight. A custom routing feature<sup>1</sup>, available on the select truck-specific GPS units, lets you enter your vehicle profile (customizable by height, weight, length, width, and hazardous materials carried) to find truck-preferred routes best suited for your rig and load. With onboard trip planners, you can easily change your route to include preferred roads, waypoints, or cities. And if you're driving in unfamiliar territory, there's a feature that shows you popular routes used by fellow truckers in the vicinity. Plus, driver alerts for upcoming bridge heights, weight limits, sharp curves, steep grades, and other potential "oops-factors" help add safety and take the guesswork out of getting your load delivered on time.



## Quality-of-road-life Features

Need to make a pit stop? Grab a shower? Park your rig? Find a reliable mechanic? To help simplify life on the road, your OTR-friendly GPS can include searchable database information such as a Truck & Trailer Services directory that helps you locate all these things and more. The directory can filter listings by brand or amenity, such as "Restaurants" or "Showers." And truck-specific parking data helps you locate the choice slots at truck stops and rest areas along your route. You can even access load-to-dock guidance features that show potential loading zones or storage lots available as you're approaching your drop-off destination.



## Staying Connected

Want hands-free calling? Smart notifications on the big screen straight from your smartphone? Live traffic, weather, fuel prices? A voice assistant you can ask for directions? All these connectivity features and more are on the menu with these new-generation truck navigators.

Bottom line, if you are still using your old GPS navigator, you can probably navigate your rig from Point A to Point B. But a GPS that understands how truckers work can do so much more to make life on the road less stressful and more enjoyable. Check out the latest GPS gear at your favorite travel stop, and see if you don't agree. ●

FOOTNOTE: <sup>1</sup>Not available in all areas. Entering your truck profile characteristics does not guarantee your truck's characteristics will be accounted for in all route suggestions. Always defer to all posted road signs and road conditions.



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## Is a Pre-trip necessary?

By Craig Daniels

You get up in the morning, roll out of bed and into the driver's seat, certify yesterday's logs, turn your logs on to start the clock on your pre-trip inspection, walk to the store to get your coffee, and get behind someone that is way to slow. Then you realize your clock is already running and you have to hurry. You fast walk back to the truck and push the brakes in and roll. Forgot to pour coffee in your cup from the Thermos, "no one is behind me; I'll stop right here at the stop sign and do it. Where did he come from?" Now you hurry more.

*We all did the 100+ point inspection for the DOT when we tested for our CDL. Have you done one since?*

Sound familiar? Have you seen this person? Is this person you? What if he was your pilot on an airliner? "No big deal, everything was running fine when I stopped, and I'll do a shorter pre-trip tomorrow to make up for the wasted time today." Two miles down the road, BOOM! Trailer tire goes out, or John Law pulls you over because your lights aren't on your trailer. Now your refer codes out for being out of fuel. What kind of a day is this turning out to be?



**Pre-trip inspections are absolutely worth the time to do correctly.** They can make the difference between getting there on time and even getting there at all. We all know how to do them. We all did the 100+ point inspection for the DOT when we tested for our CDL. Have you done one since? Have you checked even ten things today? The fact is most of us don't, not even close. Tires go down over time, and checking them when they are cool is the only way to tell them for sure. Lights do go out, springs holding your airlines up do fail, and bolts and screws from someone working on their truck do go into tires when you park for the night.

I do live in the real world and understand shortcuts here and there, but they will always cost you something somewhere. What is the minimum you can/should check to get you through the day? That's all up to you. However, I suggest you not cut too much, if anything. The more you do it, the faster you get at doing it correctly, but don't go so fast that you miss something important. Do it and do it right. **"Any job worth doing is worth doing well. But in order to do that, you have to do it over and over again"** —Thomas Keller

Then pour your coffee, get your snacks within an arms reach, put your seatbelt on, and roll. Now that you know you are driving a safe vehicle, you will not feel rushed and get to your delivery on time. ●



*Craig "loring" Daniels has been driving for Crete/Shaffer/Hunt for the last seven years. Daniels is an Army veteran who went into heavy equipment repair after serving, and that led to almost twenty years of building roads by running asphalt plants, rock quarries, and paving crews. He tried his hand at his own business as a subcontractor, but he started driving truck when the economy tanked in '09. He has been led to help and guide others along the way in what he calls divine intervention. He has trained and mentored other Crete/Shaffer/Hunt drivers, helping new family members with policies and procedures unique to the company. He has been exposed to some special people who have taught and continue to teach him the force's ways and is proud to call a few good friends he values and takes their knowledge to heart.*



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JUNE 1<sup>ST</sup> to JULY 31<sup>ST</sup>

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- 1** *What was the hardest part of becoming a truck driver?*
- 2** *What do you miss the most when away from home?*
- 3** *Do you currently use a CB radio on your truck?*

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## Road Ready for Summer Driving

By Kim McDonnell

As a truck driver, most of your time is spent in the confines of your cab and making sure it is clean and tidy is good for your physical health and mental health. Your truck is your home on the road, and keeping the interior and exterior clean, organized, and well maintained will protect not only you but your investment in that rig you drive. Our RoadPro Council members weighed on some great tips to keep your truck in tip-top shape not only heading into Summer but all year round:

### Interior



Ramona Hogue drives slip seat, and since she shares her cab with other drivers, she is especially mindful of keeping the cab's interior clean. "I spray a fine mist of rubbing alcohol everywhere on the inside, especially the seats, and then use a bucket of my favorite cleaner and a scrub brush, and basically wash down everything that is not cloth or glass," she said, "I then clean the windows, gauges, and chrome handles and leave a damp cloth on the driver's side to wipe off my shoes as I get in and out." She does this every time she makes a stop in

order not to drag dirt into the truck. She also uses a beach towel sewn at the sides to make a big pocket that she can then slip over the seat. This way, she is sitting on a clean seat and not having to worry about what another driver may have left behind.

Joanne Fatta drives for Four Seasons produce and has had occasions where she has also slip seated. However, for the most part, she has a designated cab. "Currently, my company sanitizes trucks on a daily basis due to COVID, if you request it." Commented Fatta, "But I always grab wipes daily and go over everything each day before I jump in."

*Every council member we spoke to said that having a clean truck reflects on you in a big way, not only with your customers you are delivering to but also the DOT.*

Allen and Sierra Wilcher recommend using your air hose to blow out the dust from your dash, under your seats, and other areas where dust and dirt accumulate. Then wipe everything down with a damp cloth and a cleaning spray that cuts down on greasy residue. Sierra also likes to use a solution of water and white vinegar. "The vinegar will kill germs and is safe to use on fabric; it is less irritating to the skin and is pet safe." recommended Sierra, "It will also do a great job on glass, windows, and mirrors."

Kenyette Godhigh-Bell likes to use a Swiffer with wet pads to clean the floor surfaces of her truck. "I would also recommend a handheld vacuum and a small broom and dustpan to have on hand," she commented.

### Exterior

Tip number one – WASH IT AND KEEP IT CLEAN! Every council member we spoke to said that having a clean truck reflects on you in a big way, not only with your customers you are delivering to but also the DOT.



Buckwalter likes to wash his truck thoroughly each time he comes home, and when he is out for an extended period will utilize the truck wash when he stops. He pays particular attention to the stains and soot his stacks create, removing the tar and bugs and thoroughly cleaning his tires. Various products are specific to cleaning your tires to make sure they are kept in great shape and prevent dry rot; he prefers those geared towards tire dressing. "Once in the Spring and again in the Fall, I use an engine and chassis degreaser to remove oil, tar, and grease from the undercarriage."



Most of the Council advised that when washing your truck, be sure to use a professional solution specific to washing a truck and use warm water. Stay away from products that may not be specific for trucks or dish soap that can affect the paint job and remove the wax. Once the truck is lathered up remove the soap suds with a squeegee and a clean sponge. Take a scrub brush and loosen up the dirt on your wheels and rims. Helpmate recently launched several great cleaning tools that you may want to check out specific to cleaning your truck. Rinse the exterior thoroughly, and some said they start by using buckets of warm, clean water followed by spraying away all the remaining suds with a hose. Once the truck is dry, you may want to consider moving it to a shady spot and apply a good coat of wax. This will help protect your truck's finish and make your truck look fantastic.

### Keeping it Clean All Year Round

The Council also had a few more tips. Make it a habit to do small things to keep your truck in the best shape, both inside and out. Simple things like having a microfiber towel handy to wipe down the dash daily, removing the trash regularly so it doesn't pile up, or doing your laundry more often will make a big difference inside your cab. The same goes for the exterior; run it through that truck wash if you cannot be home to do it yourself, clean your windshield and mirrors frequently, do what you can to keep your truck looking good. After all, a clean truck can improve your mental well-being, decrease stress, keep you organized and just help you feel better. You might just get some compliments along the way too! ●



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