

## Velocitization and The Trans-Canada Highway

Have you ever had the feeling of doing something wrong but didn't quite know what it was you were doing wrong? Many drivers across our great land have the same feeling while leaving a freeway or the Trans-Canada Highway. They apply the brakes and begin to slow down only they aren't going slow enough. They suffer from a common problem; velocitization. To some new drivers, this problem was contagious due to their parents suffering from it. It's not a disease; it's a driver issue that can easily be controlled.

Velocitization happens when you feel you are going slower than you actually are. Your brain, after analyzing what your eyes see, wants to keep going at the higher speed you were used to. How long does it take for your brain to start playing cognitive tricks on you? Not very long at all. Just a few minutes actually. But there are ways to control this feeling. When was the last time you had this feeling of velocitization? Have you even noticed it?

The first thing to do to avoid velocitization is to look well ahead to notice the change in traffic flow and to look for the speed limit signs. If you give yourself time to *gradually* slow down, your brain will also have more time to get used to that new speed. The off-ramps are usually long enough to allow this gradual speed adjustment which works better than a sudden change of speed. A few minutes at that slower speed and you've controlled this problem since your brain has made the adjustment. Checking your speedometer will come in handy if you want to really control that feeling of velocitization.

To most people who are familiar with this feeling, they often associate velocitization with freeway or highway speeds and then coming into the city environment. That's not always the case. Traveling at speeds such as 60 km/h and then having to drop to 30 or 40 km/h, such as a school zone, will often cause difficulty for most drivers. Again, looking ahead to spot slowing traffic and change of speed signs and then reducing speed early will often make this change of speed easier to deal with.

If it's your brain that wants to keep going at the higher speed, keep telling it to go slower. Constant glances at the speedometer will give you the much needed information about your current speed. Make the conscious effort to make changes so your brain can form a new habit. Plenty of repetition will be required for this to happen. Part of controlling velocitization is wanting to. Is it driver attitude? Is it driver skill? Is it both? Do you feel that if you're driving 20 km/h or 30 km/h faster when exiting the faster roadways that you'll reach your destination sooner? Chances are you'll just reach the next red light sooner.

Controlling velocitization is *not* about avoiding a ticket. It's about controlling your vehicle and protecting those within your community. Going too fast for conditions puts you, your passengers and other road users at risk of injury or death. Let's work together as a society and slow down where needed.

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