

Hi Ross. I don't think there's a performance or race driver in the world who hasn't been told to look further ahead, and reminded over and over again how important vision is to the act of driving fast. It's one thing to look further ahead, but it's another to look where you need to - at the right time.

When I talked with [Jeff McKague](#) for my *Speed Secrets Podcast*, he shared with me a very cool way of looking at how to use your vision (no pun intended). As he is a certified sports vision trainer (but first, a driver and instructor for the past three decades), I asked him to put it in writing so I could share it here. I love how Jeff presents what is both simple and complex at the same time - where to look.

Enjoy! You can also learn more about Jeff at [Event MATRIX](#).

Connect The Dots by Jeff McKague

There is something magical that happens when your eyes see the track differently for the first time. The track is the perfect place to realize the potential that vision can give you as a driver; it's where sight can be measured by lap times.

Let me establish something quite simple but very important: *making the apex of the corner is most effective if you are at the best angle to get to the exit*. To illustrate this forward-thinking trajectory, let's consider a child's connect-the-dots drawing.



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"You have to visualize a second or two ahead of your car what line you are taking, what you are going to do, before you get there because it comes too fast."

- Emerson Fittipaldi



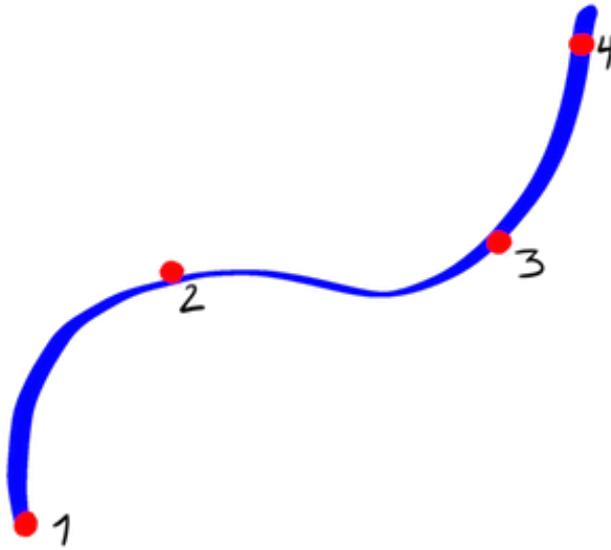
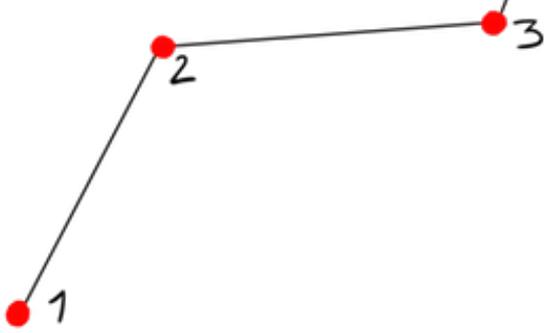
Use your mental vision.

There's nothing like facing a blind turn, is there? Turn 3b at Sonoma, 2 at Mosport, the Corkscrew at Laguna Seca, 10 at VIR, and Turn 1 at Sebring with its wall on the inside blocking your view of the exit. All super-challenging because you can't physically see where you're going.

But you can - and must - mentally see through the corner.

Physical vision is what we can physically see. "Mental vision" is what we can mentally see - what we can picture in our minds. It's also the key to being fast through those blind corners.

Drivers often ask why they struggle in certain corners more than others, and blind corners are a common concern. The difference is the ability to mentally see



The difference here is that when a child starts the drawing, they will move their pencil from dot #1 drawing a straight line to dot #2 before they look at dot #3. The adult, however, connects dots #1, #2, and #3 with a continuing line. They determine an arc early in the process to avoid the rigid lines and sharp pivotal turns we see in the child's drawing.

If we move this idea to the race track, or even the street, we could create arcs that serve to make us faster every time. Treating the "Turn Point" as dot #1, "Apex" as dot #2, and "Exit" as dot #3, as in the concept of the adult drawing, your line will never go wrong. There are many advantages to implementing this strategy. Consider, when you return to a corner, it is unlikely that you will be in the exact same spot every lap. When passing another car, your desired line into the corner is compromised by leaving space for that car, therefore you will have to find a new turn point. Seeing the whole, or greater amount, of the corner will better indicate to your brain the speed at which you should be traveling into the corner; discovering obstacles, like debris or oil, before you enter the

the ability to mentally picture oneself driving through a section of the track that can't physically be seen.

One thing I know 100% for sure is this: Developing the ability to mentally see a blind corner is a skill that can be learned; it's not something that some people are born with and others are not. Okay, there might be some small differences in the abilities one is born with, but I know for a fact that the ability to mentally see through a blind corner can be developed. Really, we're talking about using one's imagination. And don't tell me you don't have the ability to imagine (if you've ever worried about something, then you've imagined - you put a mental image in your mind of something going wrong in the future).

What I will admit is that mentally seeing something while sitting at home or in a chair in the paddock is different than doing that at speed while approaching a blind corner. But mentally seeing the blind corner at home or in the paddock is the start. And if you imagine it enough times, with enough detail while sitting still, it'll "magically" appear in your mind at speed.

It simply takes practice. Which takes some commitment. That's all.



But Wait, There's More...

If you liked Jeff's article (and you should), you can also listen to our conversation on the podcast at Podcast.SpeedSecrets.com - this coming Thursday (two days from now). He shares more thoughts on how to train your vision to be an

turn gives you the advantage of planning an alternate line.

You may be perfectly accurate going from the turn point to within inches of the apex, but if your car is not at the best angle to come off the corner, you'll not be able to roll into the power the way you want to. By seeing the exit before you start the turn you will, most times, be faster even if you aren't perfectly accurate. Example, when the tires start to overheat and the car slides a bit on turn-in, you will be better prepared to change line with the exit in view than simply looking at the apex. As a result, you may miss the apex by a foot or two, but it will be faster than trying to get to it, in this instance. Your brain will make the adjustment in milliseconds - even faster if you train it with sports vision training.

The simple concept of glancing at the radius of a corner as you approach it will tell your brain how much or little to brake. Which, by the way, is a question I get every day I am teaching on the race track, "How fast can I go into this corner?" My answer is always the same "only go as fast as you are comfortable." You will only know what is comfortable by seeing the corner as you approach it. Limiting your vision by looking at the turn point alone will have you slowing too much or not enough. The driver who has great sight is discovered when all drivers go to a new track, as the visual driver will be up to speed much faster. What I am suggesting is to train yourself to use your peripheral to be the main source of your vision.

Let's breakdown the visual steps of a turn: Just before you need to brake, glance over the corner as a whole; you want to see the exit point. Do the same for a corner combination. Try to see the exit of the combination, especially if it is a chicane. Your brain will formulate the line and appropriate speed. Then bring your eyes back to look at the first part of the corner. Note that you should not be looking with a focal lens but a peripheral view. Your main concentration is on the turn point while having the apex (and possibly the exit), in your view. Just as you turn into the corner your peripheral concentration goes to the apex while having the exit in view. Just before you pass the apex, your peripheral concentration goes to the exit and your view is down the straight or looking into the next corner after the straight. So, in essence, where you once looked at the dots with your focal vision is now changed to your concentrated peripheral vision, while your unconcentrated vision is looking at the dots with your focal vision.

even better driver. It's great stuff!

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looking where you will be next.

With a blind corner, the same thinking applies except you won't be able to see the next point; you will have to use imagery. This is accomplished by driving a number of laps, walking the track, and taking pictures to create the brain image that would be seen by your peripheral until it becomes real, once you pass the obstruction that blocks your view.

Your eyes are the key to driving fast and well. Train them like you would a muscle in the gym and you will be an even better driver.

- *Jeff McKague*

Web: <http://eventmatrix.ca>

Also check out: <http://eyereact.ca>