



Ford Mindfulness Car Concept Shows Why the Best Place to Steer Clear of Everyday Stress Could be Behind the Wheel

- Ford develops Mindfulness Concept Car to showcase technologies and features that could enhance everyday travel for drivers and passengers alike, improve personal wellbeing
- Hygienic cabin air and mindful driving guides are among modifications designed to ensure occupants complete journeys more relaxed than when they started
- Experts believe that mindful driving can enhance awareness and reduce distraction, as well as increase empathy for other road users, making journeys safer and more enjoyable for all

The events of the past 18 months have taken their toll on many of us – not just in terms of our physical health but also when it has come to our mental wellbeing.¹ One increasingly popular approach to managing stress and anxiety is through mindfulness – the enhanced awareness that results from paying attention and being present in the moment.

For some people, their car has proved a haven during these times, as a source of downtime away from the demands of homes that have adapted to become workplaces and school rooms, and to alleviate concerns as regards travelling on public transport.

Ford has now developed a Mindfulness Concept Car to explore how such practices can take the stress out of driving and make journeys more enjoyable. This offers a range of technologies and features that include hygienic cabin air cleaned before the driver enters the car, an electrically activated driver seat that provides a stimulating impact on breathing and heartrate, and mindful driving guides.²

“Mindfulness helps people to be more focused, calmer and achieve greater clarity – and when you’re behind the wheel, this can help make you a better driver,” said mindfulness teacher and author Mark Coleman, who created the meditation guides for the concept car. “You become more aware and responsive, while greatly reducing the likelihood of being distracted. More drivers being more mindful can make journeys safer and more enjoyable for everyone on the road.”

The Mindfulness Concept Car

Many drivers may already incorporate mindfulness techniques in their daily driving without even realising it. This may include taking a moment to breathe calmly in a stressful situation or simply pulling over to the side of the road to take in a stunning view. The Mindfulness Concept Car – based on a Ford Kuga SUV – complements such activities with a range of specially tailored features that enable users to:

Enter a hygienic and harmonious space

- **Unlock Purge** activated by the keyfob or an app provides a burst of clean and fresh cabin air via the climate control, before the driver gets into the vehicle
- **Premium filter** helps remove almost all dust, odours, smog, allergens and bacteria-sized particles
- **UV-C light diodes** stop the reproduction of viruses and germs on smartphones, screens and surfaces, for a more hygienic cabin environment

Set the mood and get grounded

- **Ambient lighting** combines with climate control temperature to provide specific moods in the cabin, such as a bright morning feeling, a calming blue sky, and a starlit night
- **Driver seat with four actuators** can stimulate and provide feedback on breathing and heartrate, with this information shown on the in-car screen
- **Wearables** monitor the driver's heartrate and other physiological measures, and can synchronise the heartbeat with the seat actuators and ambient light
- **Special interior trim** using sustainable materials, natural colours and mindful design cues

Enjoy serene and immersive sounds

- **B&O Beosonic™** equaliser enables sound spaces to be selected based on mood, including “Bright”, “Energetic”, “Relaxed” and “Warm”³
- **B&O headrest speakers** deliver sound close to the ears of the driver and passenger, and combine with **headliner speakers** to offer an immersive listening experience
- **Tailored playlists** based on situations and locations, such as seaside sounds for driving at the coast or calming music when in a traffic jam

Stay calm and refreshed

- **Adaptive Climate Control** provides calming cool air, simulates and stimulates deep breathing after driver assist tech has helped drivers avoid an incident, such as with emergency braking
- **Powernap function** for breaks during long drives, with a lay-flat seat, neck support and auditory beats that help drivers nod off and wake up refreshed afterwards
- **Specific guides** for yoga with light physical exercise and short meditation sessions, when parked or stopped. Gamification elements direct the driver's focus to the traffic

“These driver assistance systems for the mind, body and soul turn driving time into ‘me-time’,” said Carsten Starke, technical expert, Interior Materials & Experience, Research & Advanced Engineering, Ford of Europe. “The principles learned and practiced in this unique car can be applied to other aspects of life, to enhance not just daily drives, but every single experience.”

Ford believes that taking a mindful approach to in-vehicle technology could help inform the design of future electrified and autonomous vehicles, enabling occupants to spend travel and charging time in a much more useful and relaxing way.

Mindfulness and Ford

Ford already extends the benefits of mindfulness to its employees through the Ford Mindfulness Club by offering mindfulness training as well as regular meditation sessions to employees worldwide. Ford's ‘Share The Road’ campaign is designed to foster greater understanding between road users to help make the streets safer for everyone.

“A car by itself is not mindful. But how a car is used and the behaviours that it supports, can be. Ford's goal with this concept is to create experiences that encourage greater awareness. With unique features and embedded technologies, Ford is providing drivers and passengers with new ways to be mindful while in a Ford vehicle, anywhere along the road of life,” said Mark Higbie, senior adviser, Ford Motor Company, who helped introduce mindfulness to the Ford workplace.

The Mindfulness Concept Car is now on display at IAA Mobility in Munich, Germany, that runs from Sept 6-12, 2021.

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¹ <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/347309/measuring-stress-causes-experiences-outcomes-worldwide.aspx>

² The Mindfulness Concept Car is a vehicle built for research purposes. The features included are not yet readily available as a bundle. At all times, Ford promotes vehicle safety. Mindfulness and being mindful behind the wheel shall not distract the driver from driving safely and focusing on the road.

³ The Beosonic™ trademark is the property of Bang & Olufsen a/s and is applied for, registered and used in multiple jurisdictions worldwide by the owner. B&O Beosonic™ comes preinstalled in select models of EcoSport, Fiesta, Focus, Kuga and Puma with B&O sound systems.

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