

The Dutch Reach

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The Dutch Reach is a practice for drivers and passengers where, rather than using your hand closest to the door to open it, you use your far hand. This sets off a series of five linked actions: **reach**, **swivel**, **look back**, **open slowly**, and then **exit facing traffic**. The Dutch Reach is particularly effective in protecting cyclists as they are the most vulnerable to being hit by open doors.

Doing the Dutch Reach involves reaching across your chest to open the door, forcing you to swivel your upper torso, enabling you to look in the rear-view mirror, out to the side, and then over your shoulder to see if there is any oncoming traffic. After this, you can look back through the window and open the door, allowing a continuous view of oncoming traffic while preparing to exit, opening the door and stepping out.

This practice can help to avoid collisions, often referred to as 'doorings' or being 'doored'. 'Dooring' is when a driver or passenger opens a car door into the path of oncoming traffic, which may result in a collision with another vehicle, swerving or braking, and could potentially lead to injury or even death.

The Dutch Reach method can also protect drivers and passengers from being struck by an oncoming vehicle, as well as reduce the risk that their car door could be damaged or torn off by a passing vehicle.

Tips for drivers

- Check your rear-view mirror and side-view mirror before opening your car door with your far-side hand. The 'Dutch Reach' forces your body to turn, making it a habit to look for cyclists.
- Open your door slowly at first, do not fling it open.

Tips for cyclists

- Cycle outside of the 'door zone'. Ride at least 1.5 metres away from parked cars to avoid opening car doors on streets with and without cycle lanes. It is useful to remember the saying: "door and a bit more".
- Be aware of situations that could indicate a car door opening. Look out for recently- parked vehicles, vehicles with occupants visible through the window, taxi or delivery vehicles or the sight or sound of a door opening.

