



Risk Nothing Big or Expensive

Insights from ELR Pro Coaching

If there's a single principle that reduces incidents on track, it's this: **risk nothing big or expensive**. Most contact events don't come from one dramatic mistake—they're the result of small, preventable decisions stacking up over a session or weekend.

Here's how to stay ahead of them:

Outlaps Matter More Than You Think

The outlap sets the tone for everything that follows. Proper tire warm-up should take no more than two laps, and it doesn't require aggressive inputs to get there. Focus on firm, controlled braking (around 80% of max), primarily in straight lines, and brake 50–100 feet earlier than your usual markers.

Avoid high lateral loads and sudden weight transfers early—those are the real “outlap killers.” A rushed outlap is one of the easiest ways to put yourself behind before your session even begins.

Use Your Mirrors—Don't Stare Into Them

Situational awareness is critical, but so is forward focus. As I like to put it: *don't watch a movie in your mirrors*.

Instead, build a habit of quick, consistent “snapshot” glances at the same points every lap—before brake zones, at turn-in, on exit, and mid straight. Long looks away from the windshield reduce reaction time and increase risk, especially in traffic.

Check Your Equipment. Every Time.

Mechanical issues are a major contributor to avoidable incidents—and they're often predictable. After every session, take a few minutes to review the basics:

- Brake pad thickness
- Brake fluid level and condition. Low fluid could indicate a leak or brake pad wear.

- Rotor condition. Rotor cracks can form at any time.
- Tire wear and remaining lifespan (most street tires are past their prime after ~2.5 track days)
- Look under the car to see if anything is leaking.

This is addition to your pre-event inspections. Don't be the guy that stretches equipment lifespans "for cost efficiency". Stretching equipment beyond its effective window might save money short-term, but it significantly increases the likelihood of failure. Performance drops off, reliability follows, and risk compounds quickly.

Know How to Look for Flags

Flag stations are usually positioned where you can—and should—see them without going out of your natural line of sight. Train yourself to pick up these stations peripherally while staying focused on driving. Awareness here can prevent you from driving into someone else's problem.

Make Changes Incrementally

Trying something new? Good. Changing everything at once? Not so much.

Big, untested adjustments often lead to unpredictable outcomes. Instead, make small, deliberate changes and evaluate their impact. This keeps the car—and your decision-making—within a controllable window.

At the end of the day, reducing incidents isn't about driving slower—it's about driving smarter. Stay disciplined, stay aware, and remember:

Risk nothing big or expensive.

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