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Article series: Small helpers with big effects – Part 4

Trailer Assist – Manoeuvring a car with trailer simply, quickly and safely

- Innovative assistance system for towing a trailer
- Easy control thanks to integrated camera technology
- Precise manoeuvring with a joystick to point the way

Wolfsburg – Driving with a trailer is a special challenge, even for practised car drivers. Above all, reversing manoeuvres can quickly become complicated and strenuous. Volkswagen offers help in precisely these types of situations with Trailer Assist, which simplifies the manoeuvring process considerably. Regardless of whether the task involves positioning a horse trailer in front of the right horse stall at an equestrian event or a caravan at a campsite. The system handles the steering while the driver accelerates and brakes the car-trailer combination. The driving direction is adjusted using the mirror adjustment switch. Easily, quickly and safely.



Manoeuvring a trailer easily and safely



The system handles the task of steering; the driver moves the car-trailer combination by accelerating and braking

The innovative, optionally available Trailer Assist can be activated at the push of a button to enable even inexperienced trailer drivers to reverse a trailer quickly and safely. The mirror adjustment switch, which is then used as a joystick, lets the driver variably set the desired driving direction for the car-trailer combination and modify it at any time. The actual driving angle and the angle set by the driver are visualised in the instrument cluster. The system now automatically controls the electromechanical power steering, while all the driver needs to do is accelerate and brake.

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When the trailer is pointing in the correct direction, the driver simply presses the mirror adjustment switch towards the rear, and the trailer then appears to effortlessly pull the vehicle behind it along a straight line. This relieves all of the anxiety of straight-line reversing with a trailer, even over long stretches.

Playing a crucial role in the manoeuvring process is the camera technology that is integrated into the vehicle. It enables Trailer Assist to perform automatic lateral guidance of the car-trailer combination. The process is based on image processing algorithms based on data from the rear-view camera system, which monitors and analyses the articulation angle between the car and the trailer. Optical measurement of the articulation angle is used to compute the required steering angle – regardless of the type of trailer model or draw bar implemented.

The system is another piece of pioneering work by the technical developers at Volkswagen, whose goal was to make complicated parking and manoeuvring actions easier and safer. Anyone who tows a trailer will appreciate this small helper very quickly if they need to make precise movements while manoeuvring trailers in a tight space, e.g. garden waste trailers, motorcycle trailers or caravans. It ensures relaxed transport of anything that is being towed behind the trailer coupling – in work, recreation and especially during the most wonderful weeks of the year: holidays.



At a glance – the development of assistance systems for parking

1997 – First park distance control system with four ultrasonic sensors

2005 – Park distance control, front and rear

2006 – World's first parking assistant (Park Assist)

2008 – First use of Rear View

2010 – First use of 'Area View' area monitoring system

2010 – Optical Parking System (OPS)

2010 – Park Assist 2.0

2012 – 360-degree OPS

2012 – Park Assist 2.0 with perpendicular parking

2014 – Rear Traffic Alert

2014 – Blind Spot Monitor

2014 – Area View, 2nd generation

2014 – Introduction of Trailer Assist

2015 – Park Assist 3.0

About the Volkswagen brand: "We make the future real."

The Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand is present in more than 150 markets throughout the world and produces vehicles at over 50 locations in 14 countries. In 2017, Volkswagen produced around 6.23 million vehicles, including bestselling models such as the Golf, Tiguan, Jetta and Passat. Currently, 198,000 people work for Volkswagen across the globe. The brand also has more than 7,700 dealerships with 74,000 employees. Volkswagen is forging ahead consistently with the further development of automobile production. Key strategic themes for the future are electric mobility, smart mobility and the digital transformation of the brand.
