First Week Guide with the Model Y L

This guide walks you through your first seven days with a new Model Y L. You'll get your phone working as the key, set up the back rows for your family, protect the car, and learn how it drives and charges. Do one or two steps a day, in order. Each one takes about 10 minutes or less.

CREATED BY

Tesla Model YL (USA) - Owners & Enthusiasts

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PRINT

- ✓ Your whole first week on one page

Your first-week checklist

Tick each step when it's done. Keep this page in the glovebox; the pages after it explain each step.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Go in order, one or two steps a day. Each step tells you **why** it matters first, then **how to do it** in numbered steps. Gray boxes like this one are tips worth reading.

PART 1: Getting in and driving

DAYS 1–2

- [ ] 1 Get the Tesla app on your phone — Date
- [ ] 2 Set up your phone key and key cards — Date
- [ ] 3 Connect the car to your home Wi-Fi — Date
- [ ] 4 Save your seat in a driver profile — Date
- [ ] 5 Get the back rows ready for your family — Date

PART 2: Keeping the car safe and clean

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- [ ] 6 Make sure the car's cameras are recording — Date
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- [ ] 10 Learn one-pedal driving — Date
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- [ ] 13 Plan your first road trip — Date

PART 1 · DAYS 1–2

Getting in and driving

Start with the basics: set up the app, turn your phone into the key, connect to Wi-Fi and save your seat. Then get the middle and back rows ready for car seats and kids before your first family trip.

1. Get the Tesla app on your phone
2. Set up your phone key and key cards
3. Connect the car to your home Wi-Fi
4. Save your seat in a driver profile
5. Get the back rows ready for your family

HOW TO USE THE CAR'S SCREEN

The big screen in the middle of the car works like a phone: tap a button to choose it. Most settings are in **Controls**. To open it, tap the **car icon** in the bottom left corner of the screen. In this guide, an arrow means "then tap." So **Controls > Safety > PIN to Drive** means: tap Controls, then tap Safety, then tap PIN to Drive. Can't find a setting? Tap the magnifying glass at the top of Controls and type its name.

1 Get the Tesla app on your phone

Your car doesn't come with a normal key. Instead, your **phone** works like the key, as long as it has the Tesla app. The app also lets you lock the doors, turn on the heat or AC, and see how much battery is left, all from your couch.

How to do it:

- [ ] 1. Open the App Store (iPhone) or Google Play (Android) and download the free **Tesla** app.
- [ ] 2. Sign in with the **same email and password** you used to buy the car.
- [ ] 3. You should see a picture of your car. If you don't, ask the Tesla staff for help before you leave.
- [ ] 4. When the app asks to send you **notifications** (short messages that pop up on your phone), tap **Allow**. That's how it tells you when charging is done.

EXTRA SAFETY

On the car's big screen, tap **Controls > Safety > PIN to Drive** and turn it on. Now the car asks for a 4-number code before it will drive, like the lock code on your phone. A thief can't drive away without it.

> ⚠ **CAUTION**
> Tesla sells extra protection plans for the windshield and for the wheels and tires. They're easiest to add in the **first 2 weeks** after you get the car. If you want one, look under **Upgrades** in the app now, so you don't miss the window.

- [ ] **You're done when** you can see your car in the Tesla app.

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2 Set up your phone key and key cards

Your phone talks to the car using **Bluetooth**, the same invisible connection wireless earbuds use. When you walk up, the car feels your phone nearby and unlocks. When you walk away, it locks by itself.

How to do it:

- [ ] 1. In the Tesla app, tap **Set Up Phone Key** and follow the steps on the screen.
- [ ] 2. Now test it: walk about 20 steps away. You should hear the car beep or see the lights flash as it locks.
- [ ] 3. Walk back. The door handle should open without you touching your phone.
- [ ] 4. If it doesn't work well, go to your phone's settings, find the Tesla app, and set **Bluetooth** to On and **Location** to **Always**. On an iPhone, that's **Settings > Tesla > Location > Always**. On Android, it's **Settings > Apps > Tesla > Permissions > Location > Allow all the time**.

The car also comes with two **key cards**. They look like credit cards and work even if your phone's battery dies. Tap a card on the pillar between the front and back doors to unlock. Try **both** cards. Keep one in your wallet, and give the other to a family member or keep it safe at home.

> ⚠ **WARNING**
> Learn the **manual door releases**. The doors open with a button, so if the car ever loses power you'll need these. **Front doors:** pull up the small lever just in front of the window switches. **Back doors:** at the bottom of the door pocket, lift off the small cover and pull the cable forward. Show everyone who rides in the back. Use them only in an emergency, never while the car is moving.

- [ ] **You're done when** the car locks by itself as you walk away, unlocks as you come back, and both key cards work.

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3 Connect the car to your home Wi-Fi

Like a phone, your Tesla gets **updates** that fix problems and add new features. Most of these come through your home internet (Wi-Fi). Connecting also lets the car download maps and play shows while parked.

How to do it:

- [ ] 1. Park in your driveway or garage, close to your house.
- [ ] 2. On the car's screen, tap the **Wi-Fi symbol** (the little fan-shaped icon at the top).
- [ ] 3. Pick your home network and type in your Wi-Fi password, the same one you use on your phone at home.

You only do this once. The car remembers it every time you come home.

> ⚠ **WARNING**
> The trunk door opens very high, about 7½ feet, and can hit a low garage ceiling or door opener. The first time you open it in your garage, stop it a few inches below the ceiling. Then **press and hold** the button on the trunk door until it beeps. It will only open to that height from now on.

- [ ] **You're done when** the car's screen shows it's connected to your home Wi-Fi.

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4 Save your seat in a driver profile

A **driver profile** is like your own saved spot in the car. It remembers where you like your seat, mirrors and steering wheel. When you walk up with your phone, the car moves everything back to your settings by itself.

How to do it:

- [ ] 1. Move your seat until you're comfortable and can reach the pedals easily.
- [ ] 2. Fix your side mirrors and the steering wheel (find them under **Controls** on the screen).

- [ ] 3. Tap **Controls > Profiles > Add New Driver** and type your name. Then follow the steps on the screen to save your seat, mirrors and steering wheel.

If another family member drives too, they should have their own phone key and their own profile. That way no one has to fix the seat every time they swap.

To add a second driver:

- [ ] 1. In **your** Tesla app, tap **Security & Drivers > Manage Drivers > Add Driver** and enter their email.
- [ ] 2. They accept the invite in the Tesla app on their own phone, then set up their phone key (like Step 2).
- [ ] 3. In the car, they make their own driver profile (like this step).

> - [ ] **You're done when** your name is saved as a driver, and the car moves the seat back for you after someone else changes it.

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5 Get the back rows ready for your family

Four of the six seats can hold a child car seat: the two big **captain's chairs** in the middle row and the two seats in the **third row** at the very back. Do this step before your first trip with kids. Not sure you got it right? Many fire stations and hospitals will check a car seat for free.

How to do it:

- [ ] 1. Pick where each car seat goes. The middle captain's chairs are the easiest to reach.
- [ ] 2. Set that seat back fully **upright**, and lower its head rest (press the button on its side and slide it down).
- [ ] 3. Put in the car seat with its **LATCH clips** or with the car's seat belt. LATCH clips hook onto small metal bars hidden in the crease of the seat. If the child faces forward, also hook the seat's **top strap** to the metal loop on the back of the car's seat. Follow your car seat's own instructions.
- [ ] 4. Grab the car seat where the belt or clips go through it and tug side to side. It should move less than an inch.
- [ ] 5. Tap **Controls > Locks > Child Lock** and turn it on. Kids in the back can't open the doors from inside, and in the L they can't fold or tilt the back seats either.
- [ ] 6. Practice folding the third row with the switches on the trunk wall or the back-seat screen.

WARNING

Never put a car seat where the baby faces backward (rear-facing) in the front passenger seat with the airbag on. Children 12 and under should always ride in the back. In the third row, don't use a car seat's pop-out side support (the little wing on the door side). It can get in the way of the side airbag.

CAUTION

LATCH clips have a weight limit. If the child plus the car seat weighs more than **65 pounds**, use the seat belt instead. Before folding any seat, check that no hands, feet or bags are in the way.

- [ ] **You're done when** each car seat is tight, Child Lock is on, and you can fold the third row.

PART 2 · DAYS 2–4

Keeping the car safe and clean

Make sure the cameras are recording, so the car is protected while you drive and while it's parked. Then add a few simple extras to keep the inside looking new: floor mats that fit, a screen protector if you want one, and a tidy storage box.

6 Make sure the car's cameras are recording

7 Put in all-weather floor mats

8 Decide about a screen protector

9 Organize the middle storage box

6 Make sure the car's cameras are recording

Your car has cameras all around it. **Dashcam** records while you drive, in case of an accident. **Sentry Mode** watches the car while it's parked, in case someone bumps it or tries to break in. The videos are saved on a small storage stick called a **USB drive**. It plugs into a slot in the glovebox, the small cabinet in front of the passenger seat.

How to do it:

- [ ] 1. Open the glovebox and look for a USB drive. Some cars come with one, but many don't.
- [ ] 2. If there isn't one, buy one. Look for **64 GB or bigger** (that's how much video it can hold). It should say **"high endurance"** (made to record all day) or be a small **SSD** (a tougher type of drive). Cheap ones wear out fast.
- [ ] 3. Plug it into the glovebox slot. On the screen, tap **Controls > Safety > Format USB Drive**. This erases the drive and sets it up for the car's cameras.
- [ ] 4. In the same menu, turn on **Dashcam** and **Sentry Mode**.

> ⚠ **CAUTION**
> After a day, open the camera app on the car's screen and play a video. If you can watch it, it's working. Many people find out their drive was broken only after they needed the video.

- [ ] **You're done when** you've played back a saved video on the car's screen.

7 Put in all-weather floor mats

The cloth mats that come with the car soak up mud, snow and spilled drinks, and they're hard to clean. **All-weather mats** are made of rubbery plastic with raised edges, like a tray. Messes stay in the mat, and you can rinse it off with a hose.

To put them in, pull out the cloth mats and lay the new ones in the same spots, pressing them flat into the corners.

> **WARNING**
> Make sure the driver's mat lies flat and can't slide forward. Never stack a new mat on top of an old one. A mat that bunches up under the pedals can stop you from braking.

> **IMPORTANT FOR MODEL Y L OWNERS**
> Our car is longer than a regular Model Y and has a third row of seats, so regular Model Y mats **will not fit**. When you shop, make sure the listing says **"Model Y L"** or **"6-seat."** Look for a set that includes the third row and the trunk.

- [ ] **You're done when** the new mats are in, lying flat, with nothing bunched up near the pedals.

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8 Decide about a screen protector (optional)

A **screen protector** is a thin sheet of glass that sticks onto a screen, like the ones on many phones. It helps with fingerprints, glare and scratches.

> **CAUTION**
> Tesla's manual says **not** to put a screen protector on the touchscreen. If one ever damages the screen, Tesla won't fix it for free.

Many owners use one anyway. It's your choice.

If you do get one, put it on early, before the screen gets smudgy. Do it in a closed garage so dust doesn't get trapped under it. First, wipe the screen clean with the cloth that comes in the box.

MODEL Y L SIZES
The front screen is **16 inches** and the back-seat screen is **8 inches**. Buy the right size, because older Model Y protectors are too small.

- [ ] **You're done when** you've made your choice. If you bought one, it's on with no bubbles or dust under it.

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9 Organize the middle storage box

The storage box between the front seats (the **center console**) is very deep. Small things like sunglasses, key cards and coins fall to the bottom and are hard to find. A plastic **tray or organizer** that fits inside makes small sections, so everything has a place.

There's no rush on this one. Use the car for a week, notice what keeps sliding around, then buy something that fixes that.

- [ ] **You're done when** the small things you carry each have their own spot.

PART 3 · DAYS 4–7

Learning how the car works

Get comfortable behind the wheel with one-pedal driving, and try the handy features most owners miss. Then set up charging so the car is ready every morning, and get set for your first long drive.

10 Learn one-pedal driving
11 Find the hidden features
12 Set up how and when the car charges
13 Plan your first road trip

10 Learn one-pedal driving

In most cars, letting go of the gas pedal makes the car slowly roll along. In a Tesla, letting go makes the car **slow down by itself**, almost like pressing the brake. While it slows down, the car turns that motion back into electricity and puts it back in the battery. That's why it's called **regenerative braking** ("regen" for short).

How to practice:

- [ ] 1. Go to an empty parking lot.
- [ ] 2. Press the pedal to move forward, then lift your foot **slowly**. Feel the car slow down.
- [ ] 3. Try stopping at a line by lifting off the pedal a bit earlier than you think you need to.

It feels strange for the first few minutes. After about an hour, you'll hardly need the brake pedal around town. It gives you more miles per charge and your brakes last longer.

WARNING
Lifting your foot does not always stop the car quickly enough. Always be ready to press the brake pedal, especially in traffic and on hills.

CAUTION
Because you'll hardly use the brakes, press the brake pedal firmly every now and then. This keeps the brakes from getting rusty.

- [ ] **You're done when** you can slow down smoothly for a stop line just by easing off the pedal.

11 Find the hidden features

These useful settings are easy to miss. Try each one once so you know where it is.

- [ ] **Joe Mode** (**Controls > Safety**): makes the car's beeps quieter. Great when a baby is sleeping in the back.
- [ ] **Camp Mode**: keeps the heat or AC running while you're parked. Handy for waiting in the car or resting on a trip. To find it, tap the **fan icon** at the bottom of the screen.
- [ ] **Dog Mode** (Tesla's pet mode): keeps the car cool or warm for a pet. It also shows a big message on the screen, so people walking by know the pet is safe. It's next to Camp Mode, under the **fan icon**.
- [ ] **Voice commands**: press the voice button on the steering wheel and say things like "Open the glovebox" or "Take me to the nearest Supercharger."
- [ ] **Car Wash Mode** (**Controls > Service**): gets the car ready for an automatic car wash in one tap. Turn it on before **every** wash. If the wash pulls the car along a track, also shift into **Neutral** (the setting that lets the car roll freely). To do that, press and hold the Neutral button in Controls.

> *i* **JUST FOR THE MODEL Y L**
> **Rear Comfort** (**Controls > Dynamics**) makes the ride softer for people in the back two rows. **Lock Rear Display** (**Controls > Display**) stops kids from changing settings on the back-seat screen.

- [ ] **You're done when** you've tried each feature on this list once.

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12 Set up how and when the car charges

Charging an electric car is like charging a phone: plug it in at night, and it's ready in the morning.

First, how will you charge at home?

- **A regular wall outlet** with the charging cable that came with the car adds about **3 to 4 miles** of driving per hour of charging. If you drive less than about 35 miles a day, this is often enough.
- **A bigger 240-volt outlet** (the stronger kind used for a clothes dryer) adds about **20 to 30 miles** per hour, with the right adapter.
- **A Tesla Wall Connector** put in by an electrician adds up to about **40 miles** per hour.

Want one of the faster options? Call an electrician this week. Ask for a price that includes the **permit** (the city's OK for the work).

> ⚠ **CAUTION**
> The first few times you charge from any outlet, feel the plug and the outlet after an hour. Warm is a warning sign. If it's hot or loose, stop charging and call an electrician.

How to do it:

- [ ] 1. **Set a daily limit.** Tap **Controls > Charging**. Slide the bar to the amount the screen suggests, usually **80 to 90 percent**. Like a phone, the battery stays healthier when it isn't filled to 100 percent every day. Only charge to 100 percent before a long trip.
- [ ] 2. **Pick a charging time.** Tap **Controls > Schedule**. Many power companies charge less for electricity late at night. Set the car to charge during those cheaper hours.
- [ ] 3. **Set a leaving time.** In the same Schedule screen, add the time you usually leave. The car will warm up or cool down before you get in.

- [ ] **You're done when** your daily limit, charging time and leaving time are all set while parked at home.

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13 Plan your first road trip

For long drives, type where you're going into the car's **map** (not your phone). It will add stops at Tesla's fast chargers, called **Superchargers**, and show how many open spots each one has. It also gets the battery ready, so it charges faster when you arrive.

Pack these before you go:

- [ ] The Model Y L has **no spare tire**. Bring a **tire air pump** that plugs into the car, a **tire plug kit** (seals small nail holes) and a **tire gauge** (checks the air in a tire).
- [ ] Your **charging cable** and the small **adapter** from the glovebox, so you can charge at hotels.

> ⚠ **WARNING**
> If a tire is badly damaged, especially on its side, **don't drive on it**. Use the Tesla app to call **Roadside Assistance**, and ask for a **flatbed tow truck** (it carries the whole car).

- [ ] **You're done when** your tire kit and charging cable are packed in the car.

CHEAT SHEET

Your First Week at a Glance

The key settings and steps from this guide on one page. Keep it in the glovebox and tick each box once it is done.

Days 1–2: app and keys

- ☐ Download the free **Tesla app** and sign in
- ☐ Allow notifications
- ☐ **Controls › Safety › PIN to Drive**: turn it on
- ☐ Set up **Phone Key** in the app
- ☐ Phone: Bluetooth On, Location **Always**
- ☐ Test both key cards on the door pillar
- ☐ Learn the manual door releases (front and back)

Days 1–2: Wi-Fi and profiles

- ☐ Tap the Wi-Fi icon and join your home network
- ☐ Set the trunk height in a low garage (hold the button until it beeps)
- ☐ **Controls › Profiles › Add New Driver**
- ☐ Add a second driver: **Security & Drivers › Manage Drivers**
- ☐ Protection plans: decide within **2 weeks** (Upgrades in the app)

Days 1–2: car seats

- ☐ Car seats go in the middle captain's chairs or the third row
- ☐ Seat back upright, head rest down
- ☐ Tug the car seat: it should move less than an inch
- ☐ **Controls › Locks › Child Lock**: on
- ☐ Practice folding the third row
- ☐ No rear-facing seat in front with the airbag on
- ☐ LATCH limit: child plus seat over **65 lb**? Use the seat belt

Days 2–4: cameras

- ☐ USB drive: **64 GB** or bigger, high endurance
- ☐ Plug it into the glovebox slot
- ☐ **Controls › Safety › Format USB Drive**
- ☐ Turn on **Dashcam** and **Sentry Mode**
- ☐ After a day, play back a video to check

Days 2–4: inside the car

- ☐ All-weather mats that say **Model Y L** or 6-seat
- ☐ Driver's mat flat; never stack mats
- ☐ Screen protector? Your choice (Tesla says no)
- ☐ Protector sizes: **16-inch** front, **8-inch** back
- ☐ Console tray after a week of use

Days 4–7: driving

- ☐ Practice one-pedal driving in an empty lot
- ☐ Always be ready to press the brake
- ☐ Press the brake firmly now and then

Days 4–7: hidden features

- ☐ **Joe Mode**: quieter beeps (Controls › Safety)
- ☐ **Camp Mode** and **Dog Mode**: under the fan icon
- ☐ Voice: press the voice button and talk
- ☐ **Car Wash Mode**: Controls › Service
- ☐ **Rear Comfort**: Controls › Dynamics
- ☐ **Lock Rear Display**: Controls › Display

Days 4–7: charging

- ☐ Wall outlet: about **3–4 miles** per hour
- ☐ 240-volt outlet: about **20–30 miles** per hour
- ☐ Wall Connector: up to about **40 miles** per hour
- ☐ Feel the plug after an hour: hot means stop
- ☐ Daily limit **80–90%**: Controls › Charging
- ☐ Cheap night hours and leaving time: Controls › Schedule

Days 4–7: road trip

- ☐ Type the trip into the car's map, not your phone
- ☐ No spare tire: pack a pump, plug kit and gauge
- ☐ Pack your charging cable and adapter
- ☐ Badly damaged tire? Call Roadside for a flatbed

Menu names can change with software updates. Can't find a setting? Tap the magnifying glass in Controls and type its name. Checked November 2026.