



„FAHRVERGNÜGEN“ – Speeding to save a few minutes? Why driving faster rarely helps you arrive on time.

Von Christian Rook

It was one of those days when time feels like a resource that's been calculated too tightly. His daughter's choir performance in the state capital – marked in the calendar for weeks. And yet, he's still at the office, already ten minutes late, with a guilty conscience breathing down his neck.

Just as he reaches for his jacket, a colleague calls him back – “just a quick thing,” supposedly not even five minutes. He stays. One last email. Then finally out the door.

The roads? Packed. Rush hour traffic. And there it is: the traffic jam he hadn't accounted for.

Minutes slip away. His hands on the steering wheel grow damp. When traffic finally clears, he hits the gas. Maybe something can still be salvaged.

But is it really worth it?

The Speed Illusion

Let's take a typical highway drive of 160 kilometers – for instance, from Kassel to Hanover or from Nuremberg to Munich.

If you average **120 km/h**, the trip takes **exactly 80 minutes**.

Increase that to **130 km/h**, and the journey shortens to **73.8 minutes** – a gain of just **6.2 minutes**.

Go even faster, and you get a bit more time back:

- At **140 km/h: 68.6 minutes**



- At **150 km/h: 64 minutes**
- At **160 km/h: 60 minutes**

So compared to 120 km/h, you save a **maximum of 20 minutes** by driving at 160.

That sounds like a good deal. “Leave at the same time and still arrive punctually. Just press the accelerator – with this trick, you'll never be late again.”

But a closer look reveals the trap: the time saved per additional km/h diminishes rapidly.

From 120 to 130 km/h, you still gain 6.2 minutes. But from 150 to 160, it's only **another 4 minutes**.

So the faster you drive, the less time you actually save – and the higher the price you pay.

Mistake: Average \neq Top Speed

What's often overlooked is that these numbers refer to **average speed**.

But over a 160 km stretch with traffic, speed limits, construction zones, lane changes, exits, and delays, no one can drive at a constant pace.

Even on a completely unrestricted highway, there are braking phases, overtaking maneuvers, and fluctuations that drag down the average.

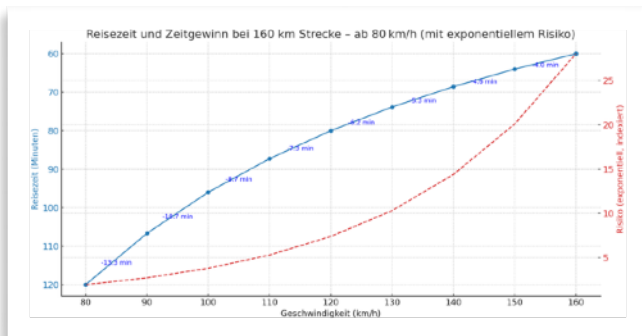
To **achieve an average speed of 160 km/h**, you'd need to **drive far faster than that most of the time** – often **170 or 180 km/h**, just to offset the slower stretches.

That means the vehicle is operating at extremely high speeds for most of the journey – just to hit that average.

Risk: Off the Charts

The risk rises **dramatically** at higher speeds. When speed increases from **80 to 160 km/h**, the risk of a fatal crash increases by a **factor of 25 (!)**.

Why? Because **kinetic energy**, or crash



Time saved (blue) vs. Risk increase (red)

force, increases **with the square of the speed**.

At **180 km/h**, the force exerted in a crash is more than **twice** what it would be at 120 km/h. Even the most advanced safety systems struggle to cope with these forces.

The **braking distance nearly quadruples** – while your **reaction time stays exactly the same**.

The likelihood of a severe or fatal accident rises **exponentially**.

This is no longer just a statistical risk – it becomes a **real, existential threat**.

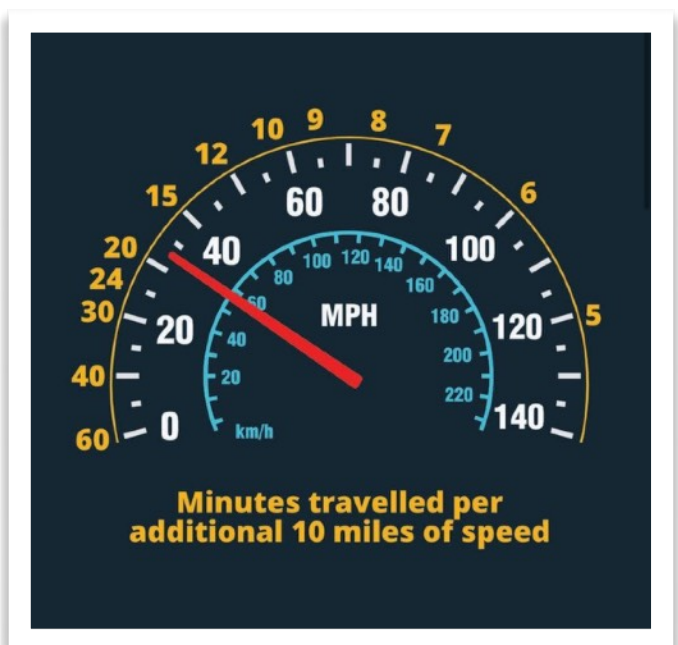
A deer on the road, a momentary lapse in attention, a careless lane change:

At 180 km/h, there's virtually no way out.

Why We Still Speed

Our behavior behind the wheel is often driven less by logic and more by emotion and distorted perception.

Present Bias is the tendency to overvalue short-term gains – like the feeling of catching



Source: Rory Sutherland

up on time – while ignoring long-term risks.

There's also the **illusion of control**:

The faster we drive, the more "in control" we feel – even though in reality, our margin for error shrinks with every additional km/h.

And under stress, our **sense of time warps**. Speed feels efficient.

But in reality, it often saves next to nothing.

British advertising strategist **Rory Sutherland** sums it up perfectly:

"People overestimate speed – and underestimate quality."

The Real Conclusion

By the time he finally arrives, the choir performance is nearly over.

His daughter is still on stage, the last song fading out. She smiles when she sees him.

And yet, the thought lingers:

If he had just left on time, he would've seen the whole thing.

If he hadn't sped, he might've arrived one minute later – but without panic, without sweat, without the sinking feeling of having disappointed again.

And without the **25-fold increase in crash risk**.

The real time saver isn't speed.

It's **good decisions, better planning – and sometimes the courage to miss a little in order to hold on to what truly matters.**



Christian Rook

info@christianrook.com

www.christianrook.com