

# All Buckled Up: Alan Cathcart on the Evolution of Seatbelts



## The Early Days of Seatbelts

The concept of using a device to restrain occupants in a vehicle in the event of an accident dates back to the early days of motoring. In 1885,

Edward Claghorn of New York patented a "safety belt" that consisted of a strap that was attached to the vehicle's frame and worn around the occupant's waist. However, this device was not widely adopted.



### All Buckled Up by Alan Cathcart

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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In 1903, a French inventor named Gustave Delage patented a similar device, but it was not until 1936 that the first commercially available seatbelt was introduced by Volvo. This seatbelt was a two-point lap belt that was attached to the vehicle's floor and worn around the occupant's waist.

### Lap Belts and Shoulder Belts

Lap belts were the most common type of seatbelt for many years, but they did not provide adequate protection in all types of accidents. In 1959, Nils Bohlin, a Swedish engineer working for Volvo, invented the three-point seatbelt. This seatbelt consisted of a lap belt and a diagonal shoulder belt that was attached to the vehicle's B-pillar. The three-point seatbelt is still the most common type of seatbelt in use today.

### Seatbelt Legislation

The first country to make seatbelts mandatory was Sweden in 1959. Other countries quickly followed suit, and by the 1970s, seatbelts were mandatory

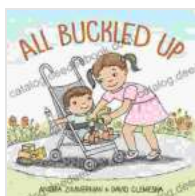
in most developed countries. In the United States, seatbelts became mandatory for new cars in 1968, and for all cars in 1984.

## The Benefits of Seatbelts

Seatbelts have been proven to be one of the most effective ways to prevent death and serious injury in traffic accidents. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), seatbelts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45% and the risk of serious injury by 50%.

Seatbelts work by preventing occupants from being ejected from the vehicle in the event of an accident. They also help to keep occupants in place and reduce the risk of head and neck injuries.

Seatbelts have come a long way since the early days of motoring. Today, they are an essential safety feature in all vehicles. Seatbelts have saved countless lives and prevented countless serious injuries. If you are ever in a vehicle, make sure to buckle up. It could save your life.



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