

Driving Posture

Many of us have to drive for a living or spend hours in the family taxi. There are a number of pointers to remember.

Get out of the Car - on Long Journeys

Take a break, a ten minute breather can make all the difference to your back, but no real difference to your journey time.

Drink water or juice, avoid caffeine and high sugar foods, make sure you get some fresh air and allow your eyes to rest. When you take a break don't sit watching the traffic and where possible avoid synthetic light.

In the car

There are no set rules for how your chair should be adjusted this will depend on your problem.

Avoid having the seat too far back or too upright:

Generally speaking your arms should be flexed and able to reach the top of the wheel without straightening. **Often it can help to vary the position of the seat throughout the course of the day.**

People that drive for a living often develop postural habits that they are unaware of, resting your elbow on the drivers window edge for example, these habits can often result in problems as muscles shorten and the joints of the neck are put under strain. Many of these problems only surface after years of abuse or when a change of circumstances alters how you drive.

- Your bottom should be placed squarely in the seat, avoid turning your shoulders inward by placing your elbow on the drivers door.
- Many drivers benefit from a lumbar support, or just having a small cushion in the car that they can use to alter the position of their back.
- Vary the positions of your hands upon the wheel (use 5 and 7 o'clock as well as 9 and 3).
- Don't turn to get equipment from the rear seats while seated in the front, get out and use the rear door.
- While stationary don't work with a laptop on the passenger seat as this twists the low back, set the drivers seat back and use it on your lap.
- Never sit on a wallet in your back pocket, it causes 'wallet sciatica'.

Avoid stress,

When driving for business you can be working to a tight schedule, perhaps visiting new places where parking isn't easy. Driving with stress is particularly bad, your eyes become fixed on the car in front, your shoulders rise, your neck slumps forwards, this results in headaches, tiredness and bad temper. You can't change the situation but you may be able to change your reaction - by relaxing, breathing, and getting some perspective.

Practice:

Lifting the shoulders and letting them drop – if you are relaxed they should clunk.

Rotating the shoulders, backwards and forwards.

Side-bending the neck gently - to get your ear to your shoulder.

