



## BACK CARE FOR DRIVERS

### TOP TIPS

- ✓ Adjust your car seat to provide the best possible support for your back
- ✓ Take regular breaks and move around in your seat...think POSTURE
- ✓ Avoid twisting when getting in or out of the vehicle
- ✓ Avoid twisting to reach items from the back seat
- ✓ Never lift heavy things straight after a long drive – loosen up first!

### **Driving shouldn't be a pain in the back!**

Confined in a fixed position for hours on end? Stressed out by the traffic? Roads full of pot-holes? It's not surprising so many people get back and neck ache after driving for a long time, but there are things we can do to prevent problems or to ease existing discomfort.....

### **Take regular breaks from driving**

- ❖ To reduce the risk of back pain, avoid sitting still for lengthy periods – get out and walk. Walking boosts the circulation in your back and legs; this nourishes and hydrates the discs, which don't have their own blood supply.
- ❖ At a fuel stop, park away from the kiosk – a chance to walk further.
- ❖ Take frequent breaks..a few minutes now and then can prevent time off with back pain later. A drink (water or juice – not too much tea or coffee) will help keep the discs hydrated and your mind alert

### **How to get in and out of your vehicle safely**

- ❖ Avoid twisting. When getting in, sit on the edge of the seat and rotate your body into position. When getting out, turn your whole body towards the door, lower your feet to the ground then stand up.
- ❖ Sliding the seat back can help if space is restricted.
- ❖ When driving a high vehicle, use the footstep. It may seem quicker to jump down, but the repeated impact can cause damage.

## Are you sitting comfortably? What to try if not....

- ❖ Your seat may feel comfortable at first, but after an hour or so can cause discomfort or pain if it's not giving the support you need, as strain is placed on the structures of the spine.
- ❖ If you feel that your seat isn't giving you the support you need, try a rolled-up towel or a lumbar roll in the 'small' of your back.
- ❖ Adjust your seat as in the diagrams below
- ❖ Think about your posture..relax your shoulders, keep your chin in and your head upright.
- ❖ Don't grip the wheel too tightly as this tenses your muscles, increasing stress and pain.
- ❖ When you stop at traffic lights, do some simple exercises – move your neck forwards, back and side to side. Lift your shoulders towards your ears then roll them back against the seat, relax and repeat.

([www.backcare.org.uk](http://www.backcare.org.uk))



Sit with your buttocks as close as possible to the backrest. Adjust the distance to the pedals so that your leg is slightly bent when you press a pedal to the floor.



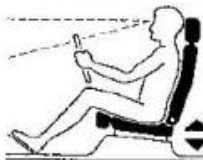
Adjust the seat length adjuster so that your thighs are in contact with the seat almost up to the back of the knees. The distance between the edge of the seat and the back of your knees should be about two or three fingers wide.



Your shoulders should be as close as possible to the backrest. Adjust the angle of the backrest so that you can easily reach the steering wheel with your arms bent. Your shoulders should remain in contact with the backrest when you turn the steering wheel.



A lumbar support is properly adjusted when the natural curvature of your lower spine is fully supported.



Adjust the height of the seat to the highest comfortable position. This ensures that you will have a clear view on all sides and of dashboard instruments.



The backrest side bolsters should be positioned close enough to your upper torso to provide comfortable lateral support without restricting movement.



Adjust the tilt of the seat so that you can easily press the pedals down to the floor. Your thighs should rest lightly on the seat cushion without pressing on it. Check the angle of the backrest before starting the car.



The upper edge of the headrest should be aligned with the top of the head. Adjust the angle to allow about three quarters of an inch between your head and the headrest.