

For the journey

- * Roll up a small towel to make a lumbar support
- * Use a cushion to raise your hips out of a "bucket seat". Fold a third of the cushion under and put that end at the back of the seat so that your hips are raised up, but your knees remain at the same level.
- * Break up a long journey by stopping every hour. Get out and walk around for a few minutes.
- * Take a cool pack with you and wedge it under your clothes whilst you walk around.

Benefits of chiropractic

Chiropractic is used to help resolve a problem as well as for maintenance care. Many patients return for this in the same way as they would maintain a vehicle by servicing it. It is not necessary to be in pain to have treatments in the same way as a car is serviced before a breakdown. Postural advice and self care is included in the treatment and exercises may be advised when appropriate. A patient's appointments are generally with the same chiropractor.

This leaflet is for anyone who suffers discomfort with driving as well as providing advice for employers of drivers.

Drivers who spend more than half their working day in a vehicle are three times more likely to suffer spinal disc problems.

Most back problems experienced by drivers are caused by adopting a fixed position for long periods together with vehicle vibration and poor seat design.

Health & safety at work regulations require employers to assess health & safety risks.

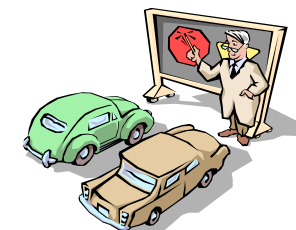
Driving involves sitting in a confined space, with any change of position restricted by the steering wheel & pedals.

ADVICE FOR DRIVERS



**The
Natural Health Centre
Shrewsbury**

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WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A VEHICLE

Consider what the vehicle is to be used for

- Will loads need to be regularly placed in and removed? A low boot sill may be required
- Do you need power steering, as this places less strain on the back, especially when manoeuvring. Drivers who have to make frequent stops, e.g. delivery drivers, need to beware of this.
- An automatic gearbox can reduce back strain, without the need to depress the clutch and reach to re-engage the gears.
- Is there adequate headroom?
- Do the pedals feel slightly "offline" from the centre of the seat? This is sometimes the case in small cars.
- Can you get in & out without difficulty?
- Test drive for at least an hour, or hire the same model for a day
- Check that the pedals are not offset from the centreline of the seat.

Back Friendly seating

- Firm & supportive.
- Backrest to be wide & high enough to support the upper body with adjustments for height, level & rake.
- Adjustable lumbar support for size (in & out). This will accommodate different depths of lumbar curve.
- Adjustable lumbar support for height. This will ensure that support is at the correct level.
- Seat length which does not press into the backs of the knees.
- Headrest to be adjustable and a short distance behind the head.
- If your current vehicle is not comfortable, there are back support aids available.
- Adequate head room.

HELPING YOURSELF

Driving is stressful for everyone, but for those with targets and deadlines to meet the pressure is worse. It is very tempting to press on and not stretch the legs. Frequent breaks will also stretch the spine even if its only for a few minutes walking round the vehicle. Don't remain in your vehicle for a break.

Getting in & out.

Keep knees & ankles together when getting out. Swing your legs out first, then stand up. Similarly, sit down & lift both legs together into the car. You will need to use your abdominal muscles! A plastic bag on the seat makes swivelling easier.

Be spine aware –

- * are you clenching your buttock muscles?
- * Are you gripping the wheel and sticking your chin forwards?
- * Can you depress the clutch without stretching?
- * Is the headrest adjusted so that it gives protection in an accident? The top of the headrest must be higher than the top of the ears.
- * Keep your chin in and don't grip the wheel tightly to avoid tensing the shoulders

Use a traffic jam to exercise. Pull in your stomach muscles and simultaneously breathe forcefully out. Raise the shoulders towards the ears, roll back the shoulders (not the car!) & relax.

Lorry drivers should not jump down from their vehicles. The step is there to prevent jarring impacts though the spine after sitting as well as an aid to getting in.

Lifting into & out of your vehicle

Before unloading stand with the hands in the small of your back and look at the sky. This will stretch the back after driving.

In the boot, place heavy objects nearer to the bumper so that you can avoid reaching. Consider securing them in place so that they do not slide out of reach. Consider storing items on the seats, as long as they are secured.

Do not reach from the front seat to get items.

Park nearby, but so that doors can be opened, thus ensuring the best possible lifting posture.

The Shropshire McTimoney Chiropractic Group is run by Avril Sanders Royle, an established chiropractor who has been in practice since 1984.

The Group operates from two sites:

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The Natural Health Centre has chiropractors available six days a week in a busy multi-disciplinary complementary health centre. Avril Sanders Royle is available on Mondays Wednesdays and Thursdays at Rock House. All chiropractors in the Group are graduates of the McTimoney College of Chiropractic and are registered with the General Chiropractic Council.

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