# Stepping Stones to a better posture:Driving Position

***British Chiropractic Association offers advice to keep you standing tall***

According to consumer research by the British Chiropractic Association, 25% of those questioned felt that driving was one of the factors affecting their posture.

*We are a nation obsessed with using the car, but at what cost to our bodies?*

Tim Hutchful, a chiropractor from the British Chiropractic Association says:

*"There is almost twice as much pressure on your back when you are sitting incorrectly than there is if you stand up. Those most at risk are the people who not only spend long periods of time in the car, but also those who make infrequent short journeys in the car – because it can be compared to an unaccustomed form of exercise."*

**Follow these top tips from the British Chiropractic Association:**

## Make adjustments

- If you share a car, make sure the seat position is adjusted to suit you each time you get in.
- The back of the seat should be set slightly backwards, so that it feels natural and your elbows should be at a comfortable and relaxed angle for driving.

## Steering wheel

- Once you have adjusted your seat correctly, your hands should fall naturally on the steering wheel, with just a slight bend in the arms.

*If the wheel is too high and far away, tension will build up in your shoulders and upper back. If it is too low and close to you, the wheel may be touching your legs, which will reduce your ability to turn it freely, putting strain on the wrists and the muscles of the upper back.*

**Airbag safety**: Once you have adjusted your seat and steering wheel, ensure that the adjustments allow for the recommended ten inch (25.5cm) distance between yourself and the airbag cover in your steering wheel.

© British Chiropractic Association 2009
This information may not be reproduced without permission of the British Chiropractic Association. enquiries@chiropractic-uk.co.uk

### Mirrors

- Set your mirror positions to suit you before you drive off.

*Your reactions must be quick, so you should not need to move your head a lot. The mirror positions should allow you to see all around the car with the movement of your eyes with minimal head movement.*

### Seatbelts

- Your seatbelt should always lie across the top of your shoulder and never rub against your neck or fall onto the top of your arm.
- Depending on your height, you may need to adjust the position at which the seat belt emerges from the body of the car.

*If the adjustments available are insufficient, it is possible to purchase clips that help you adjust your seat belt height without impairing safety.*

### Footwear

- Once you have adjusted your seat correctly, your feet should fall naturally onto the pedals. You should be able to press the pedals to the floor by mainly moving your ankle and only using your leg a little.
- Avoid wearing wear high heels, or very thick-soled shoes, as you will have to over-extend the ankle in order to put pressure on the pedals. As well as making it much harder to deal with an emergency stop, this position will raise your thigh from the seat (reducing support to your leg) and create tension (and possibly cramp) in the calf. This, in turn, will impair the blood flow on a long journey.

**Relax -** A relaxed driving position reduces stress on the spine, allowing your seat to take your weight.

**Take regular breaks -** The BCA advises that you should stop and stretch your legs (and arms!) at least every two hours, more often if possible. You should certainly stop more frequently if you are feeling any discomfort.

**Clench your cheeks -** If you are stuck in traffic, exercise in your seat. Try buttock clenches, side bends and shoulder shrugs and circles

**Leave the tight clothes at home -** They will restrict your movement.

**It's all in the timing -** Allow plenty of time for journeys to avoid stress.

Further information about BCA chiropractic treatment can be obtained by logging onto www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk For further information contact the British Chiropractic Association on 0118 950 5950.

© British Chiropractic Association 2009
This information may not be reproduced without permission of the British Chiropractic Association. enquiries@chiropractic-uk.co.uk