

Osteopathy and driving

- More people have to spend hours behind the wheel. With the roads congested it is often a stressful experience. There are 4 main areas to consider when driving:
- The best way of getting in and out of your car. Avoid twisting when getting in. Sit your bottom onto the seat first, and then turn your whole body into the car. When getting out, turn your whole body towards the door and place your feet on the ground and stand up.
- The car seat. Bring the seat so that it is upright enough so that you can depress the clutch without over stretching. If your seat is adjusted correctly you should feel your shoulders are not rolled forward. You should always sit as far back into the seat as possible, your hips should be in line with your body, not so that your legs are spread (this will avoid knee pain). Adjust the lumbar support; however, you will probably find that the lumbar support does not correspond to the lumbar area of your spine. You will probably need a small folded towel in your low back area.
- Whilst driving relax your hands on the steering wheel. Shrug your shoulders up towards your ears and relax. Alternatively try to pull your stomach muscles in, breath out forcefully and relax. Take regular breaks. When stopping in service stations park the car as far away from the facilities as possible, enjoy the walk.
- After arriving at your destination do not immediately unload the car as this can be a recipe for disaster as you may have stiffened up during the journey. Move around for 5 minutes before unloading. When getting something out of your boot, don't bend your back, bend your knees. Turn your whole body; don't twist..

If you already have back pain you can choose a car with a high curb height, an automatic with power steering can also help.

There are several complaints that can be related to driving:

- Neck pain
- Headaches
- Shoulder pain
- Wrist pain
- Elbow pain
- Back pain
- Pain in the bottom
- Hip pain
- Knee pain
- Foot and ankle pain

Is the car the right fit for your body?

There are three tests to check whether the car is right for you:

- 1** Sit in the seat and place both hands together pointing forward.
If the steering wheel is not offset then your hands will point to the centre of the wheel.
If the wheel is off set you will rotate your spine which can cause back pain.
- 2** Make a fist with your left hand you should be able to place this between the top of the car and your head.
- 3** Hold the steering wheel with both hands; you should be able to see equal amounts of each leg between your arms.