

Driving Ourselves Around the Bend!

We 'like driving in our cars'. Research from the British Chiropractic Association found that over 32,000 people¹ will visit a BCA chiropractor each month with injuries that are aggravated or caused by, a bad driving posture. It doesn't matter how often or how little you use your pride and joy – it could be doing you damage.

Rebecca Rees, BSc.(Chiro) and Jack Stow, MChiro from the **Havelock Chiropractic Clinic** in Maidenhead say "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."

The research identified the three groups most at risk:

School Run Mums

- Turning round and twisting to deal with children in the back - twisting to such a degree whilst sitting down is potentially damaging because your spine twists but your pelvis and legs are anchored
- Having to reach into the car to lift children and school bags – the further away the weight is, the more the strain on your back

Reps on the road

- Suits can restrict movement and shiny soled shoes could slip off pedals, whilst high heels cause you to over extend your ankle
- The amount of time spent in the car – not just driving but also using laptops whilst stationary. Rotating in your seat to use your laptop, or to complete paperwork, will put pressure on your spine
- Lifting samples and equipment in and out of the car – bending from the waist increases stress on your lower back

Taxi/Commercial Drivers

- Sitting still in vehicle for a long periods of time as it reduces the blood flow to the muscles and joints, increasing incidence of pain and fatigue
- Vans boast a great deal of space in the back, but drivers space is limited and inflexible
- Suffering stress due to time pressures for delivery drivers and passenger pressures for taxi drivers!
- Lifting and handling heavy items

¹ Research conducted amongst BCA chiropractors August – September 2003

Rebecca Rees, BSc.(Chiro) and Jack Stow, MChiro have the following advice for all drivers:

- **Relax** – a relaxed driving position reduces stress on the spine, allow your seat to take your weight
- **Make adjustments** - if you share a car, make sure you adjust the seat position to suit you when you get in. Make sure the seat is slightly backwards so that it feels natural and that your elbows are at a comfortable and relaxed angle
- **Take regular breaks** – the BCA advises that you should stop and stretch your legs (and arms!) at least every two hours
- **Clench your cheeks** - if you are stuck in traffic exercise in your seat. Try buttock clenches, side bends and shoulder shrugs and circles
- **Unload** – walk around the vehicle before unloading rather than stretching behind you
- **Leave the tight clothes at home** – as they will restrict your movement
- **It's all in the timing** - allow plenty of time for journeys to avoid stress
- **MOT your body** – we regularly MOT our cars, do the same for your spine and visit a BCA chiropractor at the **Havelock Chiropractic Clinic** to make sure you are sitting correctly and safely
- **Pain is a warning sign – do not ignore it**

Our Chiropractors

Chiropractors Rebecca Rees, BSc.(Chiro) and Jack Stow, MChiro have nearly twenty years experience between them, are members of the British Chiropractic Association (BCA) and are registered with the General Chiropractic Council (GCC).

Clinic Information

Havelock Chiropractic
1 Havelock Business Park
Havelock Road
Maidenhead
Berkshire SL6 5FH

01628 779900

www.havelockchiropractic.co.uk

info@havelockchiropractic.co.uk

Opening Hours

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| Monday | 08.00 - 20.00 |
| Tuesday | 08.00 - 20.00 |
| Wednesday | 08.00 - 13.00 |
| Thursday | 08.00 - 20.00 |
| Friday | 08.00 - 17.00 |
| Saturday | 08.00 - 12.00 |

Director: P T CHRISTER MChS

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