

## Well-being

- Take frequent breaks – every couple of hours is the optimum time to minimise body and brain fatigue
- Plan to leave for your journey a little bit earlier - remember it's better to arrive late than not at all
- Purchase a lumbar support cushion for the lower part of the spine, as supported muscles do not fatigue (cause pain) so readily
- Purchase a seat wedge which will tilt or throw your lower back in to its optimum position of a 20° angle
- Occasionally pull/squeeze in your stomach to work your core stability muscles which support the spine. Hold this strong squeeze for 10 – 15 seconds at a time
- Make sure one of the first things you do when getting in to your car is to check the head restraint making sure it is at the right height to provide support and comfort. This is also really important for the bigger picture as it could help to prevent debilitating whiplash injuries to the neck.
- Be aware that if you drive with your window open. cool breezes and draughts cause muscles to contract which can cause pain and muscle spasm.

## Stretching

- A good stretch to do during one of your breaks or on arrival is to put the pelvis in to the opposite position that it has been held in while seated. This can be done by putting one leg forward, bending the front knee, going in to a lunge position and feeling the stretch down the front of the back leg which must be kept straight.
- Alternatively with feet facing forward and in parallel, bend your right knee so that your foot is up towards your buttock and behind you. Now grasp your right foot or ankle with your hand and pull the foot and leg backwards. This will stretch the quadriceps muscle and the sacroiliac joint on that side.
- Occasionally pull/flex your toes up and back towards you with your heel on the floor to stimulate circulation through your lower legs.
- The left leg often spends long periods of time in-active and can roll off to the side which puts undue stress on the pelvic region. Try slipping something supportive (a towel or sweater) down between your leg and the car seat to keep it supported and inline causing less torsional stress on the pelvis.
- At traffic lights you can do shoulder rotations back and forth and gentle neck and head rotations.
- You can even apply some deep massage pressure to your shoulder area which can be surprisingly effective in relieving accumulated tension and can help to ease headaches. Try some deep breathing – in through the nose and out through the mouth. This slows down the heart rate, oxygenates the brain which can become starved in a stuffy car. This will help keep you more alert and focussed and can induce a more relaxed feeling.

Ensure that you choose a safe and appropriate time to exercise, do allow yourself to become distracted from the driving task.