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Driving Without Pain

Many people experience neck or low back stiffness after driving. Back pain, headaches and leg cramps can become routine, even for drivers who only drive short distances. Modern life involves spending so much time in cars, it is imperative that car seats support our spine. Unfortunately, as the engineering and design of our cars has evolved, the comfort and ergonomic design of car seats has been neglected.

TIPS FOR COMFORTABLE MOTORING Back and Neck Support Driving with poor posture will cause back and neck ache, as well as poor concentration and fatigue. Sit back in the chair to support your spine. If your seat does not offer sufficient support you can buy a lumbar support or place a rolled-up towel in the small of your back to support the spine's "S" shape. To reduce the risk of whiplash, reduce the distance between the rest and your head. Steering Wheel and Chair Position Adjust the wheel so your arms are not stretched or cramped, which could strain your shoulders and neck and lead to fatigue. Adjust your seat to allow you a comfortable view of the road. If you are small, jack up your seat to prevent overstraining your neck. Ensure that your feet are not too far from the pedals. If you are tall, slide

the seat back to avoid cramp. Long Distance Driving Sitting in one position for a prolonged period will result in stress and strain on the spinal joints, muscles and ligaments. Stop for a few minutes each hour. Walk about to ease the spine and minimise aches and pains. Getting in and out of your car Swing your legs in and out of the car with your knees together. Never climb into or out of the car one leg at a time. After a long journey walk for a few minutes before you unload your boot. Your joints and muscles are cold and can be easily injured by such heavy lifting.



Eating to beat stress

Chronic stress can have a negative effect on our physical health as well as our mental wellbeing. It can play a role in our susceptibility to illness and disease, but also in day-to-day functional problems such as pain and stiffness. There are many steps we can take to improve our ability to cope with stress; nutrition is one of them. Find out what and how to eat to better manage stress... Balancing your blood sugar To cope well with stress, we need our food to provide us with balanced, sustained energy. Foods that quickly break down into glucose and are quickly absorbed – such as sugary foods and fast-releasing carbohydrates – may give us a burst of energy, but can cause our blood sugar to peak and then dip. This can actually increase our body's stress response and stress hormone levels, as well as making us feel irritated and out of control. Here are the three fundamental steps to balancing your blood sugar: Eat primarily whole foods: vegetables, animal foods (eggs, fish, unprocessed meat, unsweetened dairy foods), nuts and seeds, beans and lentils, and some fruit. Avoid sugary snacks, refined carbohydrates and other processed foods such as breakfast cereals Making sure every meal includes a good serving of protein, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrates. The primary protein foods are the animal foods mentioned above, and nuts and seeds, and beans and lentils. Healthy fats are found in nuts and seeds, oily fish, avocados, and coconut. Complex carbs are found in vegetables, whole fruit (i.e. not fruit juices), whole grains, beans and lentils Eat regularly. Skipping meals or leaving too long between meals can cause your blood sugar level to drop too low, which can also trigger a stress response Getting enough food As well as eating regularly, getting enough food is important when you're dealing with stress. Going on a weight loss diet – whether it's low-calorie, low-carb or low-fat – during a stressful time

can be particularly bad for your stress levels. Instead, now is the time to focus on balancing your blood sugar as outlined above, by eating regular meals, getting enough protein, healthy fats and non-starchy vegetables and cutting the refined carbohydrates and junk foods. You should find it easier to manage your weight – or lose weight – by eating in this way anyway.

Healthy snacking Although regular snacking is not the best thing for everyone, it can be helpful if you're coping with stress, again by helping to keep your blood sugar on an even keel. Your snacks need to be based on whole foods, and contain some protein and complex carbohydrates. Examples include: Two or three oatcakes with one of the following: a tablespoon of hummus, guacamole, cottage cheese, half an avocado, a hard-boiled egg or a teaspoon or two of nut butter (e.g. almond butter). A pot of natural yoghurt (without added sugar) with some berries and/or a tablespoon of pumpkin seeds mixed in. A wedge of left-over home-made frittata/omelette. However, you shouldn't need to be snacking more than once between meals; constantly 'grazing' can have a negative effect on your weight and your digestion!

Magnesium-rich foods The mineral magnesium plays a vital role in our psychological health, including our mood and how well we cope with stress. It's thought that both physical and emotional stress can increase the body's need for magnesium; and that having a low magnesium to calcium ratio can actually increase the release of stress hormones such as adrenaline.* The best food sources of magnesium are green leafy vegetables such as kale, chard and spinach; seeds and nuts; and whole grains – especially buckwheat and rye.

B vitamin-rich foods Like magnesium, B vitamins also play a vital role in our energy as well as our psychological function. The various B vitamins are found in different foods, but the best all-round sources include eggs, oily fish, organ meats (especially liver), seeds and nuts, and beans and pulses. Luckily these are also foods that are great for our blood sugar balance!

Avoid overdoing stimulants Many of us turn to stimulants such as tea and coffee when we're feeling stressed. But stimulants of any kind also trigger the body's stress response. Try to keep your coffee consumption in particular to a minimum. Tea can have a gentler stimulating effect so can be better tolerated, but keeping it to one cup a day can still be advisable. Try to introduce calming herbal teas such as chamomile and spearmint – especially later in the day. Note that alcohol can also act as a stimulant as well as a relaxant. It also disrupts your blood sugar balance. Keep alcohol to a rare treat and stick to one drink only.

* Seelig MS. Consequences of magnesium deficiency on the enhancement of stress reactions; preventive and therapeutic implications (a review). *J Am Coll Nutr.* 1994 Oct;13(5):429-46.



Are you ready for the Nottingham Open?

Summer time has arrived and with it the added need for us to take extra care of our necks, backs and spines to avoid pain and injury... If the arrival of sunshine has caused you to pack away your winter jumpers and, instead, pull out your racket, shin pads or helmet for a bout of summer activities, remember to take note of these simple steps to ensure you steer clear of any unwanted pain and discomfort. RUNNERS can avoid injury by regular stretching of the tendons and wearing good shoes with shock-absorbing features. RACKET-SPORTS PLAYERS should be wary of playing through the pain of Tennis Elbow. Tennis Elbow is in fact an overuse injury, caused by repetitive movements at the wrist forcing the thumb outwards and the palm upwards. Continuing to play will only exacerbate the problem. GOLFERS are particularly prone to lower back injuries. Graphite clubs and soft spiked shoes will help absorb the shock which can bring on back injury. Your chiropractor can suggest appropriate warm-ups and exercises, and help you work on an alternative swing. GARDENERS commonly suffer from aches and pains, but they can avoid lower back trouble by kneeling on one leg rather than bending from the hips, keeping the back hollow whilst digging, and varying tasks throughout the day to avoid repetition injury. DIY, like gardening, is often far-removed from everyday activities. When the sun is shining many will want to get out in the garden and get on with the long list of DIY jobs that have piled up over the winter months. Enthusiasts often injure their back by inhabitual exertion, so when lifting, take the weight on bent legs, keeping the back straight.

We treat all conditions that affect any muscle or joint in your body, from your head to your little toe! One of the most common complaints that we treat is back pain and Chiropractic is recommended by the government authority, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) for acute and chronic back pain. Some of the other conditions that we treat are: neck and head ache, shoulder pain, leg and hip pain, knee and foot pain, sciatica and arthritis. Our registered Chiropractors all have at least five years training. Treatment costs can be covered through most health insurers. If you are in any doubt, we are always very happy to talk with you on the phone to see if your condition will respond well to Chiropractic treatment or offer you a free advice session to discuss your condition in person. Call the clinic now to arrange an appointment time that works for you. 0115 9225085

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