



## Advice for travellers

Do you commute long distances to and from work? Do you suffer from neck or back strain on long journeys?

You may find the following top tips helpful. This is the sort of advice we give to people who attend the Wye Physiotherapy Practice.

Your car needs to suit your own height and build. If you are contemplating buying a new car, you need to test drive it for at least half an hour to ensure it is comfortable for you.

The seat needs to be back far enough so that your legs and arms are in a slightly bent position and so that you can reach the pedals and steering wheel comfortably.

To prevent neck strain, try keeping your hands a reasonable distance apart on the steering wheel. Relax your shoulders and tuck your chin in, preventing it from poking forwards and keep your head upright.

The driver and passengers need to maintain the natural hollow in the base of the spine. If the car seat does not have a lumbar support, try placing a rolled up hand towel in the small of your back.

When getting out of the car, swivel your whole body towards the door with your knees together. Slide both feet to the ground together before standing up. This prevents twisting from the waist.

Sitting for a long time in a cramped position is bad for your back. On long journeys make frequent stops. Get out of the car and walk around for a couple of minutes. When standing, try stretching backwards with your hands placed on the back of your hips.

If you need to reach anything from the back seat, avoid twisting around from the front. Get out of the car and open the back door.

Here are some simple ideas to follow when loading luggage into the car:

1. Use containers of manageable size. Avoid large suitcases
2. Never lift anything that is too heavy for you. Test the weight by lifting one corner first. If too heavy, get someone to help.
3. Check footwear and clothing. It is better to wear flatter shoes to avoid over balancing. Tight clothing can restrict movements.
4. Follow the rules of lifting when loading the boot: Feet apart, bend knees, back straight. No twisting.

If you suffer from persistent problems then you need to consult your GP or a physiotherapist.