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Healthy Back Tips for Road Trips



We're smack in the middle of summer, which can only mean one thing... road trip! It's no secret that car rides can be hard on your back, especially your low back, and even more so if you're traveling for an extended period of time. While we live much of our lives in a flexed posture - sleeping curled up, sitting to eat, sitting at a desk, watching TV - but the stress placed on your back while driving is different. There are forces on our low back, such as accelerating, decelerating, swaying side to side and even minor vibrations. You also use your feet and legs to control the vehicle and they aren't able to be used to help stabilize the spine. The discomfort can happen whether you're the driver or the passenger and if you've already been experiencing back pain, it can definitely be worsened over the miles.

● Before You Go

- Prevention is one of the best ways to prevent significant increases in back pain with driving.
- Consider purchasing some helpful accessories such as a memory foam seat cushion that can specifically help deal with tailbone pain.
- Optimize your seat back to the proper angle - we recommend 100 to 110 degrees. Placing it more reclined than this can lead to a head-forward posture and neck pain.
- Ergonomics are important. Your seat should be close enough to the steering wheel to provide a relaxed upper body posture (but stay a safe distance away from the wheel!) and your feet should be placed flat on the floor with the knees around 90° of bend (also, when able to do safely).
- Because most cars lack proper lumbar support, create your own. While you can buy a driving pillow, you can also simply roll up a sweatshirt and place it in the small of your back for an easy solution.

● While You're On The Road

- If you're driving for longer than an hour, short breaks are essential. Sitting in one position for an extended period of time can tighten your back muscles, which in turn can lead to

pain and even muscle spasms. Everyone should ideally take at least a 15-minute break for every 2 hours of driving. If you're prone to back pain, you may want to take breaks more frequently, such as every 30 to 60 minutes. Stand, walk and stretch the lower back, bending forward and leaning backward.

- Try using cold or heat therapy while on the road. Cold therapy can help reduce inflammation and swelling. Consider bringing a cooler to store reusable ice packs. Heat therapy can help increase blood flow and relax muscles. Take advantage of heated seats to sooth a tight back as if it's a heating pad at home. It is recommended to apply ice or heat for only 15-20 minutes at a time and recover for at least a couple of hours before the next application.
- Here's a BIG one: remove items from your pockets, most importantly your wallet in your back pocket as this leads to sitting asymmetry.

● **When You Stop At The End Of The Day**

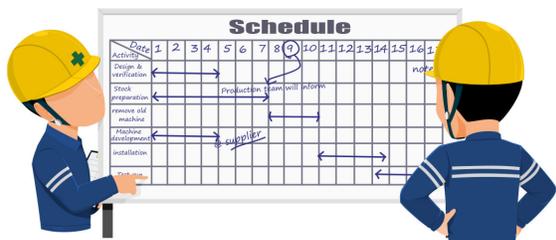
- Even if you're tired at the end of the day, this isn't the time to sit more. The single best thing you can do after a long day of driving is to provide your body with the motion it has not had while in the car. Try standing or walking and work in some gentle stretches. Core exercises can also be helpful in providing relief, but keep these non-strenuous to avoid more injury.

● **When You Get Home**

- If when you get home the pain continues, this is a good time to come see me. Minor aches and pains are very common after a long road trip, but if that pain lasts longer than a few days and is starting to limit your activity, I can help.

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer and all the adventures it brings - just remember, if it involves a road trip, take care of your back so you can enjoy it!

- Dr Chris



MORE HOUR UPDATES

(HINT: WE'LL BE OPEN A LITTLE LATER AGAIN)



Another Hour Update For You!



Pardon Our Dust

Hours Update

I know we talk a lot about hours changing, (and probably always will be!) but the good news is this update is about Dr. Chris being at the office a little later again on Monday evenings. Starting July 25th, our Monday afternoon hours will now be 3pm - 5:30pm (just like Thursdays).

Closed Days in July

Our office will be closed on July, 4th (for our country's birthday!) and on July 18th (for Dr. Chris's birthday!)

Pardon Our Dust

You might notice some construction going on in our office, please pardon our dust over the next month or so. We appreciate you understanding while we make improvements and can't wait to get to share some exciting news with you.



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