

Making driving more comfortable

All of these exercise suggestions should be pain-free. If you're unsure if they're suitable for you, chat with your doctor or physiotherapist before trying them.

Seated Exercises

You can do these exercises during rest breaks when the car is stationary and engine switched off. Passengers can do these during the journey (while keeping the seatbelt secure). Perform the movements slowly and gently:

1. Gently turn your head and neck to the left as far as comfortable, then repeat to the right.
2. While looking forward, slowly tilt your left ear towards your left shoulder as far as comfortable, then repeat to the right.
3. Gently tilt your chin down towards your chest and then slowly look up as far as comfortable, before returning to the centre.
4. Shrug your shoulders up towards your ears and then roll them forwards in circles three times.
5. Roll your shoulders backwards in circles three times and then relax your shoulders down.
6. As far as possible while keeping your seatbelt secure, gently twist your body to the left and then repeat to the right.
7. Push into the floor with your feet and shift your weight to the right side to lift the left hip slightly. Repeat it a few times each side, slowly and rhythmically.
8. Gently arch your low back and then slump into the seat slightly. Return to a comfortable, upright seated position.
9. Stretch your legs out in front of you and place your feet together. Slowly let your hips relax, so your legs turn out and your knees fall away from each other. If this is comfortable, you can relax in this position for a few seconds.
10. Separate your feet to about hip width, then keep your feet on the floor as you relax your hips so your knees relax into each other.
11. Point the toes on your left foot towards the floor, while you point the toes on your right foot up towards you. Alternate these movements in a foot pumping action.

Standing Exercises

1. Stand with your feet hip width apart, then take your hands overhead to stretch your spine upwards.
2. Place your hands on your waist and gently move your hips side to side.
3. Relax your arms beside you and gently roll your shoulders forwards and backwards.
4. Look down towards the floor and then roll your spine down to reach towards the ground (only go as far as comfortable). You can hold this for one breath, before slowly coming back up to standing.
5. Standing comfortably, place the palms of your hands on your low back to provide some support. Then, gently arch your back and lift your chest bone towards the ceiling as far as comfortable, before returning to the starting position.
6. Stand beside the car, so you can use it for balance and support if you need. Step your right leg behind you and gently bend your left knee to do a lunge. You should feel a stretch in your right thigh and possibly both calf muscles. Repeat this on the other side.
7. Also using the car for support, stand on your left leg and swing your right leg forwards and backwards in a slow and controlled movement. Repeat on the other side.
8. Open the car door and place the heel of your right leg on the edge of the doorframe. Stand up nice and tall, holding onto the car for balance if needed. You should feel a gentle stretch at the back of your right thigh.