

# Driving with FMT

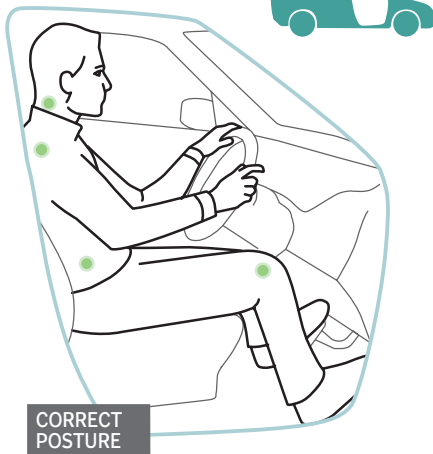
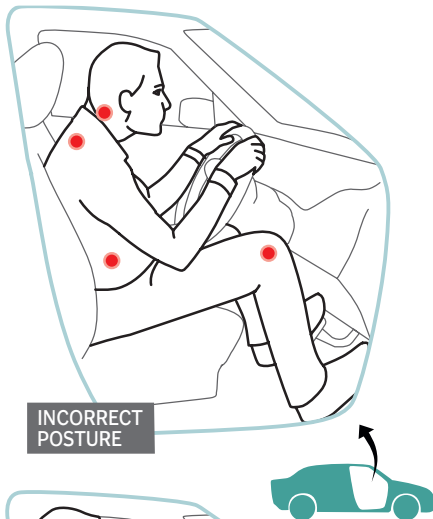
Dr Steven Kofsky

The average Delhiite's driving commute is estimated at about 45 minutes, each way.

In one day, that is an hour and a half—an average of 8-9 hours over the course of a week. Throw in a few major traffic jams and a couple of diversions due to flooded roads from monsoon rains, and your time in the car could easily be doubled. How do our bodies react?

Research has shown that people who drive, or ride in a car, for several hours each day are more likely to have low back pain. The most common areas of pain related to driving are the neck, back and knees.

First and foremost, driving or riding in a car is about sitting. In Func-



**In the correct posture there is less compression on the knees, the hips are in a more open position, the upper back and neck are aligned, and the shoulders can rest comfortably on the rib cage**

Having the seat too close to the pedals can cause the knees to rotate, putting undue pressure on the joint and soft tissues. Sitting too close can also force the driver to slouch because it positions the hips at an angle greater than 90 degrees. Sitting in a slouched position decreases the body's ability to use postural muscles appropriately.

If the backrest is leaned too far back, drivers generally compensate by moving the head forward in an effort to keep the eye level with the horizon. This causes the muscles between the head and neck to become tight and can cause headaches. Another compensation for a backrest leaned too far back is that the arms must reach farther to hold the steering wheel. This causes the muscles between the shoulders and neck to work harder than they should, creating tightness in the shoulders. The combined effect of forward head and long arm reaching is often pain radiating down the arm.

Lack of arm support along with constantly using one's arms during driving can also lead to pain in the shoulder joint or rotator cuff. The forces that most likely cause this type of pain are a combination of poor positioning and constant use of the shoulders.

We know that FMT can help mobilize joints and muscles so that our bodies function more efficiently when we engage our muscles to help improve our sitting posture. How does this transfer to the car? The Functional Manual Therapist is trained to assess each patient and provide individualized recommendations and training on how to improve posture and lessen pain while driving or riding in a car. We may not be able to shorten your commute, but we can certainly help make it less painful.

## VARDAN live efficient

tional Manual Therapy, we evaluate efficient sitting posture through Vertical Compression Test and Elbow Flexion Test. Next, we evaluate whether your commute-related pain is mechanical (stiffness), neuromuscular (poor muscle control), motor control (bad habits) or some combination of these factors. Treatment is then customized to achieve more efficient sitting posture.

With driving, motor control is a particularly important factor. Common mistakes people make in positioning themselves for driving include having the seat too close or too far from the pedals, having the backrest leaned too far back and not having appropriate arm support.

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is a Certified Functional Manual Therapist at VARDAN, a wellness initiative by The Times Group in association with the Institute of Physical Art, USA

**Functional Manual Therapy™ (FMT)** is a comprehensive approach to physiotherapy, which identifies and facilitates your existing potential through an in-depth examination and treatment of your mechanical capacity, neuromuscular function and motor control. Discover your potential to have less pain and function better with FMT!

To schedule your appointment at the VARDAN Centre (New Delhi):  
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