

# MAKING DRIVING EASIER

## NEW WAYS TO DRIVE

For many people, driving used to be second nature – something they didn't have to think about. But once you have an overuse injury, it can be something you avoid or even have to give up. Difficulty turning your neck to reverse, problems holding the steering wheel and hauling the car around corners, the constant irritation of the seatbelt against your shoulder – these can all make driving a real chore. However, there are ways to adapt your existing car to make driving easier and, if you can afford a new car, features worth looking out for.

## ADAPTING YOUR CAR

**The steering wheel:** a steering wheel cover will make the wheel thicker and easier to hold.

**The seat belts:** a seatbelt can be really irritating on the shoulder for a person with an overuse injury. If you can't move it high enough to skim over your shoulder, try covering it with a sheepskin seatbelt cover.

**Seatbelt extender:** these were originally designed for very heavy people who couldn't fit into a normal seatbelt. However, for people with limited strength or mobility in the arms and shoulders, they're a great way to make gripping and fastening your seatbelt easier. If you're buying a new car, ask to have them included.

These extenders are available at selected car accessory shops, or online at: <http://www.autobarn.com.au/>



Steering wheel cover



Sheepskin seat belt cover



Seat belt extender

**Reversing:** a reversing camera can be installed on any car and will cost about \$600.00. You will still have to turn your neck to reverse out of a park, but it will make the job easier and safer.

**The car key:** many people with RSI find a key is difficult to insert and operate. A specially-designed key-holder can make this task much easier.

**The turn signal wand:** you can buy a turn signal extension that will make using this much easier.

**A spinner knob on the steering wheel:** this will enable you to steer with just one hand. This is not a "do-it-yourself" item; it needs to be fitted by a workshop that specialises in mobility adaptations for cars. For other devices that make gripping the steering wheel easier, have a look at the Quad Fork and the Quad C on [www.ilcaustralia.org.au](http://www.ilcaustralia.org.au).

**The car doors:** for approx. \$86 you can get a 'car door opener'. For more info see [www.ilcaustralia.org.au](http://www.ilcaustralia.org.au)



Car key holder



Turn signal wand



Spinner knob on wheel

### FEATURES TO LOOK FOR IN A NEW CAR

**Remote locking:** this feature enables you to open your car, turn the engine on and off, and lock it when you leave without touching your key, which stays in your bag or pocket. You open the car simply by approaching it and lock it by touching the door handle as you leave. Couldn't be easier!

**Dash-mounted gear change:** a gear change mounted on the floor can be quite difficult to operate for many people with RSI, even when the car is an automatic. However, some cars, for example the Prius Hybrid, have a button on the dashboard that operates the gears and is extremely easy to manipulate.

**Integrated reversing camera:** this will make reversing both easier and safer.

**Foot-mounted parking brake:** not a common feature, but one that makes parking much easier. You simply press down the parking brake with your foot both to engage and disengage it -- much easier than holding in a button with your thumb while you strain your arms pulling on a normal parking brake.

**See-through headrests:** again, you don't have to twist your neck as much if you can see through the headrests.



Dash-mounted gear change



Foot-mounted brake



See-through head rests



**RSI & Overuse Injury Association  
of the ACT, Inc.**  
Room 2.08, Griffin Centre  
20 Genge Street  
Canberra City  
ACT, 2601

**BECOME A MEMBER AT [WWW.RSI.ORG.AU](http://WWW.RSI.ORG.AU)**

Low Income	\$10
Standard Income	\$20
2 Year Offer	\$30
Organisation	\$60

**Phone:** (02) 6262 5011

**Email:** [admin@rsi.org.au](mailto:admin@rsi.org.au)