Driving With Arthritis

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Arthritis-Friendly Cars and Other Driving Tips

Osteoarthritis affects the way you move and the mobility of your joints, but the resulting pain can also influence your physical and emotional well being. If you plan to take a vacation and drive the car to reach your destination, you may want to plan and organize carefully to reduce the risk of aggravation of your symptoms.

Drive an Arthritis-Friendly Car

Does your car have arthritis-friendly features? If not, consider renting one for the trip, and in the future, who knows, you may want to own one!

What does it mean an arthritis-friendly car? Experts believe such a car possesses a number a features. For example being fuel-efficient is important, to reduce your trip to the gas station (and wallet friendly, too!). To be labeled fuel efficient, a car should get a minimum of 29.7 mpg.

Next, the doors should be light-weight and the steering wheel should be small and easy to manipulate. Rather than having knobs, an arthritis friendly car has push buttons for ignition and controls. The trunk should be big enough for a scooter or other devices to fit in. Generally speaking, most new cars offer more adjustments (i.e. the steering column, the chair) and are able to accommodate various safety and mobility devices.

More Tips for Driving With Arthritis, Pain-Free

Driving with arthritis can exacerbate pain. Buy a beaded seat cover, it is specifically design to support your back, and help you “roll” in and out of your seat with less effort. Other seat cushions are designed to provide additional support for your low back. If you don’t have these special items, you can also use a big trash bag and place it in the seat of your car- it will help you get in and out easier since the bag is slippery and will slide with you.

Use the interior handles to get in or out of the car, or to maintain balance. If your car doesn’t have these grab bars, you may want to install them. Utilizing the running boards on higher cars will help you to step in and out of the car easier as well.

How easy can you open the gas cap? Consider carrying a jar opener (with rubber handles) to open the cap with ease when you fill the tank. You can also try using gloves when you drive to have a better grip on the steering wheel.

Is it hard for you to turn your car key? Ask the manufacturer of the car to provide alternatives such as electrical tape, a keyless fob or remote starter.

How Long is the Drive?

Plan your trip so you can take some short breaks if needed. Get out of the car and take a short walk to stretch your muscles and mobilize your joints. Alternatively, you can stop at a gas station, get a cup of tea or a snack and relax for few minutes. Use some light stretching exercises to relax your muscles and your joints. If you have company, don’t hesitate to ask for help, and let the other people to drive, while you rest.