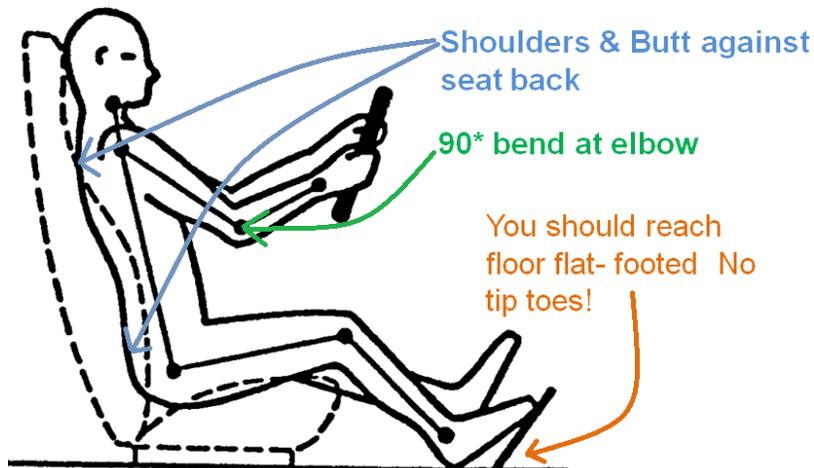


Just the Basics – 2 - Driving Position

Any discussion about driving safely or pushing the limits of a car should start with the most effective driving position. Virtually all cars have seats that move forward and backward, up and down, have reclining backs and lumbar and side bolster adjustments. In addition, many cars also have steering wheels that tilt and or telescope. A few cars even have adjustable foot pedals. With all of the options where do you start? Start with what doesn't adjust, and work your way around that, keeping in mind that the primary factor should be what feels comfortable to you.



Let's assume your pedals don't adjust. Slide your seat to a point where you can push the throttle and clutch (if equipped) pedals to the floor flatfooted, not on your tip-toes. In case of a panic situation, you want to be able to achieve full range of pedal motion. This is the furthest back the seat should be.

Once you have a comfortable distance from the pedals, let's move to the

steering wheel and seat back rake. The ideal driving position is one where you have the most control of the steering input. With your shoulders on the seat back, extend your arm to the top of the steering wheel. The top of the wheel should hit your arm just before the wrist. You should be able to grasp the wheel in the classic 9 - 3 O'clock position and have your elbow at a 90 degree bend. You want to be able to use your biceps and triceps for steering. They are much stronger and more precise than your shoulders and back muscles. (Please see the topic "Get A Grip" for information about the current theory about holding the steering wheel.)

Adjust the seat rake and /or the telescope of the steering wheel to achieve the most comfortable balance for you. As for lumbar and bolsters, remember the purpose is to keep you cupped in the seat and not squeezed in nor sliding around during cornering.

The seat back: When you are in the seat, you should have contact with the seat back from the bottom of your spine to your shoulders. This will help keep you planted in the seat and you can feel what the car is doing. It is difficult to try to steer when you are also trying to keep yourself in the seat.

As for height of the seat, you want to be able to see over the steering wheel and dash board, while keeping your weight as low in the car as possible for better handling.