



Ladies ONLY

Climbing Back Up...

By Sally Webster – Editor, Ladies Only

The ladies page was introduced to Road-Tests.com just short of a year ago. Armed with the knowledge that women make between 60 and 70% of final choice in car purchasing this gesture recognised the value that women bring to the automotive industry for a wide range of reasons. A growth of 10,000 hits per month suggests more and more people are taking it seriously with us.

The following is the story of a woman whose expert opinion on the body physical will in future assist us from time to time; bringing to your attention driving related postural issues that could quickly improve well being as well as driving pleasure.

Exercise therapist Janet Perry is an example of quiet containment. Hands clasped, back straight she recounts with flowing, philosophical calm, the course that a near fatal car crash set her on four years ago inspiring a revolutionary approach to pain and posture.

Pulled from the wreckage of a Fiat Punto in 2005 – a car whose safety features husband Graeme believes saved her life – Janet sustained cuts, bruises, a cracked sternum and badly bruised hip.

While her apparent recovery from the accident was aided by her stronger than average muscular condition, struggling to heal her acutely painful back problems with an “I can fix this” attitude didn’t work.

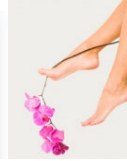
“After my legs started to periodically go numb I realised the obvious nerve damage had to be addressed. It was the last straw – an analogy used by my specialist when he examined my back. More commonly accepted now is that much lower back injury is traced back to pregnancy, birth and post birth posture. His theory was that the car crash was just too much for an already damaged back.



To my knowledge this pro-creative period is more potentially hazardous in the Western woman’s life where correct posturing is not taught properly as compared with, for instance, Eastern or African cultures where children are carried in slings while mothers work.”

Major surgery meant for Janet, lifting the sacral base off the spine, securing it with a metal cage and three bone grafts, re-fusing it to the base. Four bolts, eight pins, a graft cage and a titanium plate later Janet learned to walk again. It was painstaking.

“Then I learned to drive again, painful as it was it had to be faced.



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"It taught me so much more about posture and movement, especially in relation to the spine. Because my left hip was fundamentally damaged my doctor suggested an automatic transmission.

"Getting in, out, reversing all presented problems. Graeme organised a host of cars to try and get one at the right height, so I didn't have to stretch up or bend down. My little manual Mazda2 at that time was good, but recently Kia Motors offered to sponsor me with a Soul. It has a rear view camera and for a myriad of reasons is my favourite car. Read the review! "

Once Janet was well enough to work again she designed a class plan, over 2 years, that gradually teaches women to address posture for life changing results, currently Janet is introducing this class, with great success, at Albany Contours.

"What's wrong with my posture?' is the first question we ask. We use the mirror to address this plus pictorial references. It's very valuable for a person to identify their pain with a bonafide image of the complaint. I teach clients shoulder, shoulder blade and neck position and how to stretch the spine as well as surrounding muscle. People don't realise how much difference this can make."



Janet then addresses driving position; going out with each client to their car in turn to ensure the seat and steering wheel are aligned to suit. Here correct methods for baby-seat and baby procedures are implemented. Instruction on how to stand while on the phone, sleeping position and mattress choice is given.

"Ironically my accident steered me back to rehabilitation again. In my first days as a dancer I worked part-time with children suffering from Spinabifida, Cerebral Palsy and other motor inabilities, and then moved into training professional athletes amongst others. Later I opened my own gym and only gave it up after my accident.

"I'm thrilled to be working again in this way; my biggest fascination has always been human movement."