

The gear box
(Filed: 20/05/2006)

On road or racetrack, a clever new seat belt lock could be a real boon, writes Simon Arron

CG-Lock

Price: £49.95

From: www.cg-lock.co.uk; tel 0870 1245625 to order or 0161 832 3786 for inquiries.

Despite many articles in these pages about the numerous disabled drivers who take part in motorsport, it is still unusual to find an accessory that is aimed at physically challenged road drivers as well as able-bodied track-day enthusiasts, writes Peter Hall. The ingenious CG-Lock is one such.



It works by clamping the lap strap of an ordinary three-point seat belt to the belt buckle, in effect fixing the length of the strap and therefore allowing you to secure your hips much more tightly.

With no possibility that the strap will gradually work loose (as it invariably does on a standard seat belt), it acts more like a racing harness, improving location, sensitivity and control without all the fuss, inconvenience and cost of a four-point system, yet does not interfere with the normal safe operation of a standard inertia-reel shoulder strap.

The CG-Lock therefore suits disabled motorists who want to be seated more securely as well as off-road enthusiasts and drivers who use road-legal cars for track days or other forms of competition, and has been approved by magazines such as Circuit Driver and British Racing News.

An added benefit for all drivers is that by pulling the hips back into the seat, the device can help maintain the correct posture, helping to minimise lower back problems.

Fitting the CG-Lock is straightforward and its operation is simple. Because it does not damage the seat belt, it may be removed just as easily. It may also be left in place, but unlocked, to allow greater movement on long journeys.

"We know that the safest drivers are those who have confidence and that comes largely from having upper-body stability," said Andrew Ellis, fleet supervisor and driving assessor at the Queen Elizabeth's Foundation Mobility Centre.

One of the first to try the CG Lock was a bilateral above-knee amputee. "My body was unstable in a moving vehicle," he said, "but as soon as my hips were secured, I was able to drive again."

Another recommendation came from a woman with cerebral palsy. "I become unbalanced while driving," she said. "At first, it felt peculiar to have the lap belt tighter, but once I started driving it wasn't noticeable. I found it easier to make turns because I felt comfortable."

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For more information, call 0800 559 3636. Members of mobility organisations will receive a £5 discount, with a money-back guarantee if the CG-Lock is unsuitable.

It has been a long time in the planning, but the first British rally specifically for disabled drivers will take place over the coming bank holiday weekend (May 27-28), writes Franca Davenport.

Based in Northamptonshire, the Motorsport Endeavour Rally combines road sections with introductory sessions at skid-control centres, rally schools and race circuits under the supervision of motorsport experts. "The point isn't for people to go racing at 140mph," says organiser Graham Raphael, "but to experience different types of driving."

The rally starts at the Express Holiday Inn, Northampton, where 1964 Monte Carlo rally winner Paddy Hopkirk will flag cars away.

For more details, see www.motorsportendeavour.com.

This year's Motability Roadshow takes place at Kemble Airfield near Swindon on June 8, 9 and 10. Exhibitors include Chevrolet, Citroën, Ford, Nissan, Saab, Toyota, Vauxhall and Volkswagen. Drive-from-wheelchair models will be available to test. Go to www.aidingmobility.com to register a drive or register at the show. Driving licences will be required.

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