

Mercedes Offers Fatigue-Fighting Seating

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Mercedes-Benz is an early adopter of the seating technology claimed by its manufacturer to reduce driver fatigue and discomfort.



Mercedes-Benz is the first OEM to offer seating technology claimed by its manufacturer to reduce driver fatigue through automated micro-adjustments of the cushion and seatback.

Comfort Motion Global says its Automotive Motion Seating technology is available for the driver and front-passenger electric seats with memory function of current Mercedes GL, GLS and A- and B-Class vehicles and is branded as Energizing Seat Kinetics.

Motion Seating is a proactive technology designed to preempt tissue fatigue and reduce related discomfort, Comfort Motion Global says in a news release. The system, controllable by the user via the vehicle's touchscreen, micro-adjusts the seatback and bottom cushion throughout the drive.

These automated adjustments redistribute the occupant's weight in the seat, continuously transferring stresses to new and different tissues. With each small motion, the system transfers the workload in the spine and supporting muscles to a new area so that no one area does all the work. This allows natural tissue recovery cycles to occur, improving circulation and decreasing tissue fatigue and discomfort, the company says.

By contrast, Comfort Motion Global says, traditional massage seating is reactive, meaning it treats the pain resulting from sitting in a static position. Massage technology also requires additional hardware such as mechanical rollers and pneumatic bladders but does not address the source of the pain.

The biomechanically tested technology was developed by Dr. Paul Phipps, an Indianapolis chiropractor who has treated long-time patients for chronic back pain associated with the cumulative effects of sitting, especially when driving frequently or for long distances.

“Specializing in human performance biomechanics, I had worked extensively with professional athletes helping them to create structural balance, increased flexibility and greater stability,” says Phipps, Comfort Motion Global's chief medical officer and R&D director. “I realized these same principles could be applied to helping improve driver and passenger wellness for those spending repetitive or extended periods of time sitting in a car.”

The company says the technology can be programmed into any OEM's memory seat and can actuate any other system in the seat such as lumbar support, bolsters, heating and cooling and existing massage functions. It also says the system is customizable by each automaker, and it currently is working with 14 other OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers on the technology.

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