

Mercedes-Benz developing seats that will squirm beneath your bum

Published by Carscoops on January 6, 2017 by Matt Campbell

The world of automotive technology offers up some intriguing twists and turns, and soon a Mercedes-Benz seat could twist and turn you, the driver.



Huh? That's what we thought, but the German luxury brand has revealed at CES 2017 that it is developing new active seats under its "Fit & Healthy" in-car functions banner.

The seats, according to Mercedes-Benz, are designed to keep you moving while you're, er, moving. They feature a motion function that moves the driver around by using sensors to monitor the driver's posture and fatigue levels on long drives.

Ola Kallenius, member of the board of management of Daimler AG, group research and Mercedes-Benz Cars development, said at CES 2017 that the cockpit of the car is under-utilised as a space for health and wellness.

“Your car should really be a fitness machine,” Kallenius said. “It’s your third place – you have your home, you have your work, and you have your car. Why shouldn’t the car interact with your body and your mind in a positive way to actually make you feel better?”

2016-mercedes-benz-cls400-14

“In the evolution of man, we worked for two million years on becoming upright, only to put ourselves in a chair. Some people call sitting the new smoking. And some people – if you drive a lot – you sit a lot,” he said.

“How do you counteract that? It’s something we call motion seating. Motion seating actually senses, during the ride, how you feel, what the muscles in your back and the position of your spine and so on, is. And it adjusts the seat accordingly – like, if you’re sitting in a very long meeting, you usually don’t stay in the same position for a very long time: you try to move around and use different positions, to help with your muscles and circulation.

“The car will move the seat around, not in a dramatic way that will make you take your eyes off the road, but the seat movement will make the perfect seat position, and also using massage and sound to engage your body with the seating process, the drive will be more healthy,” he said.

Benz is also working on a vest that professional drivers – such as those who pilot trucks and buses – can wear that monitors their heart rate and other vitals in case of a medical emergency. If a driver, for example, is sensed to be exhibiting signs of a heart attack, the vest can detect that and communicate with the vehicle to pull off the road, thus avoiding accidents.

Another Mercedes-Benz program is one of Artificial Intelligence for its infotainment systems that will effectively learn your habits as a driver.

For example, if you regularly get in your car at 7:00 am on a Monday morning, and you routinely check the traffic, tune in to a specific type of music, and make a few specific phone calls, it will learn that these behaviours are typical, and attempt to streamline the process for you.

Mercedes-Benz isn’t the only brand focusing on health at CES 2017. Hyundai has also revealed a concept called the Health + Mobility Cockpit that has been designed to “help manage the stress and other negative effects of driving” by monitoring the driver.

hyundai-health-and-mobility-cockpit

“In the near future, a series of sensors throughout the car could monitor the physical and mental state of the driver, detecting everything from the driver’s posture to their respiratory rate and breathing depth.

"Also, the car could measure heart-rate variability for stress response, and use eye tracking and facial feature recognition to track alertness and emotional state. To promote mental awareness and focus, the car could then respond by delivering a customised multi-sensory experience.”

According to Hyundai, the system will use so-called “mood bursts” to encourage mental and physical activity. It will also adjust the driver’s seat, use different lighting, temperature, sound and make your life easier by creating check-lists for it to perform on your behalf.

<https://www.carscoops.com/2017/01/ces-2017-mercedes-demonstrates-seats/>