

LOCK 'N LOAD

Keith Wood test the highly effective CG Lock and nicks the evaluation unit for himself...



Here at TRC we put a lot of time and effort in trying to relay as much information across to you about every car we test or feature in these very pages. This month you can see the new and improved debrief spread in our track tests that give you all manner of interesting technical details, from acceleration to cornering G-Forces. One of the most important and obvious aspects of us being able to obtain this data, is the ability to drive the various cars that we feature to the limit.

However, one little problem that we have here at TRC is that we also drive the best that the manufacturers have to offer, by way of hot hatches or sporting variants, that they claim are just as at home on the track as the road. Of all the great road cars that we have driven over the past four years as 'Track Day Stars', each and every one shares a common problem. The ability to hold you in your seat and give you that 'feel' you need from the chassis to be able to drive fast, which is more commonly associated with being held in place by a race harness. The less experienced track day goer may not be familiar with what I am referring to, but ask any racer or seasoned track day enthusiast and they will explain to you the importance of being able to feel everything that the chassis is doing, not only from steering feedback but also from their backside.

In short, if you are moving around in your seat as you try and negotiate a circuit at high speed you will struggle to understand what the car is doing in terms of chassis movement, which could ultimately lead to you having an off; not what you want. Now imagine that you are glued to the seat, this in turn is fixed to the floor, essentially you and the car are at one. In this situation you will feel minor changes in grip from the tyres and be able to confidently deal with any small twitches or slides that may occur, way before you reach the point of no return. You are almost getting an

advanced warning from the car via the seat of your pants and this is what you need to be fast on track.

Now, you may be thinking that I'm going to suggest picking up your 'Tweaks catalogue and spending a small fortune on a pair harnesses... But I'm not. At our recent TRC Action Day at Brands Hatch I was introduced to the CG-Lock, a small lightweight seatbelt attachment that gives you 80% of the holding power that a full race harness supplies. This clever bit of kit fixes to the buckle of your seatbelt and acts like a tensioner on the lap strap part of your belt. Once fitted, by pulling on the shoulder strap, the lap belt tightens across you, which compresses your body into the seat and holds you in position, as a full harness would. It almost seems too simple to be true, but the effect is truly astonishing.

Once we had it fitted in the super quick Mazda3 MPS (see page 42), I ventured out for a few laps to see if the CG-Lock really could make a difference to what feedback I could feel from the chassis. No sooner had I reached Graham Hill bend, it was immediately noticeable that I now had a far greater understanding of how the car was behaving. As I came round on the next lap to the same corner I knew that I was carrying way more corner speed than I had prior to the fitting of the CG-Lock. In fact every corner on the circuit was now comfortably faster. Unfortunately, being a track day meant that I could not record any times to see how much of an improvement I had made, but I didn't need a stop watch to tell me. You instinctively know that you are lapping faster, that's the type of difference we are talking about. Almost like adding another 50bhp to your car, you just know it's quicker. Also, on the odd occasion I had taken a bit too much speed into the notorious Paddock Hill bend, I was instantly aware of the rear end sliding, giving me enough time to make the necessary corrections and safely continue on my way.

So, what is my conclusion of the CG-Lock? Well, the fact that I now have it permanently installed on my road car for those quiet country lane moments, and use it every time I drive a test car surely speaks volumes. I really am impressed that for less than £50 the CG-Lock can totally transform the way that you drive a car, even to the point that you will have to learn handling limits of your car all over again. Add to the mix that from an accident point of view, you are also much safer when wearing a CG-Lock, the advantages of this product seem endless.

So if you are thinking about spending a few thousand pounds squeezing some extra power from your engine so you can beat that guy in the M3, save some money. I would seriously recommend that you dip in your pocket for one of these first, you won't regret it.

Thanks: www.cg-lock.co.uk