



At Ease

Tips for Pain-Free Travel

Nearly 80 per cent of North Americans will suffer from back pain at one time or another during their lives. Don't let your vacation be the culprit! While relaxation is usually the goal of travel, there are a number of activities that can cause significant discomfort or injury to your back. Follow these easy suggestions to stay pain-free on your next trip.

While in the Car

Stretch. Before you subject your body to long periods of sitting, it's a good idea to stretch. This will improve circulation and make positioning yourself easier and more comfortable.

Support your spine. Many vehicle seats are designed to provide some lumbar (lower back) and neck support, but chances are you don't "fit the mold" exactly. Bring small pillows or specially designed back or neck pillows to give extra support as needed.



Shift positions and stretch often. When you stretch or vary your position, muscles are much less likely to lock up and cause discomfort or pain. Stop the car to fully stretch whenever muscles feel exceptionally tight or fatigued.

On the Plane

Exercise before you board. Even simply walking along the terminal prior to boarding will keep muscles from becoming stiff or tense early into the flight. **Use pillows** to support the natural curvature of your spine.

Vary positions, move and stretch. Though you don't have the luxury of stopping the plane every couple hours to get out and relieve your aching back, standing up in your seat, stretching and walking about the aisles as needed can prevent strain. Space in airplanes is notoriously tight, but a few easy stretches, like lifting your arms over your head and reaching up toward the ceiling or bending forward to touch your toes, can do the trick.

Handling Luggage

Over 50,000 luggage-related injuries are reported yearly. Many of these may have been preventable by following these guidelines.

Check bags. Check all bags that weigh more than five to ten per cent of your total body weight. Lifting heavy carryon items above your head can be an invitation for injury.

Lift smart. When bending to pick up a heavy bag, stand close to the item, bending from your knees (not the waist), and lift by engaging your leg muscles. Avoid twisting your body as you lift or carry a heavy piece of luggage.

Shift shoulders often when carrying a bag with a shoulder strap.

Know your strength. Don't be afraid to use a cart.

Chiropractic Care Can Help

If you follow these simple tips, you can enjoy pain-free, safe travel. If you do experience pain and stress on your back, doctors of chiropractic are trained and licensed to diagnose and treat problems of the spine and nervous system.

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