

AIR TRAVEL COMFORT TIPS

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Comfort is not usually the first word that comes to mind when someone mentions flying. Sitting cramped in a small space for a long plane ride can also lead to muscle and joint pain. Here are some helpful tips for a more enjoyable voyage.

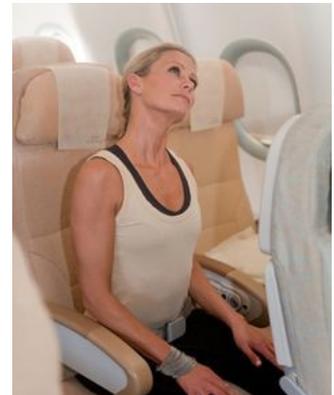
Choose the Correct Seat - Some airlines fill the plane from front to back, so ask for a seat in the back row to increase your chances of having an empty seat next to you. If the arm rests lift up, you might even be able to lie down. Aisle and emergency exit seats maximize leg room and are less claustrophobic. If you are susceptible to motion sickness, request a seat over the wings and try to schedule flights on larger airplanes.



Keep Moving - Moving around is good for your circulation and helps to prevent swollen feet and ankles. Wear loose clothing and walk about the cabin periodically every 60 to 90 minutes. Wear shoes you can slip off easily. Every so often, draw circles with your toes and contract your calves to help prevent blood from pooling in your legs. Tapping your feet can also help increase circulation and reduce the chance of muscle cramping.

Stretch it out - Try not to place anything under the seat in front of you so you can stretch your legs out. Quick and easy stretches also include standing up and raising your arms above your head, rotating your shoulders back and forth, and moving your head side to side.

Keep Good Posture While Seated - Position your lower back against the back of the chair to obtain the greatest amount of support for your spine. A rolled sweater or blanket can also be used for added support. Make sure that your weight is evenly distributed on your seat, your shoulders are not rounding forward, and you are not slouching. Support your neck and head with a pillow if necessary and avoid awkward positions if trying to rest or sleep. Try not to stay in one position for a long period of time.



Additional Tips

- **Eat Right** - Eat a light, non-fatty meal just before you leave for the airport. This can make handling turbulence a little easier.
- **Handling Pressure** - Chewing gum, yawning or sucking on hard candies can help to relieve the pressure that builds up in your ears as the airplane ascends and descends. This is not recommended for toddlers. For young children, sipping a drink may help.
- **Prevent Dehydration** - The air in most airplanes can dry out your skin and cause eye and nasal dryness. Take a moisturizer with you for your skin and wear glasses instead of contact lenses to prevent eye dryness. Drink enough water and steer clear of caffeine and alcohol as they further dehydrate you. Alcohol can also interfere with your ability to sleep.

In the event that you suffer from ongoing muscle and joint pain following your trip, you should contact a licensed health professional. For more information, visit www.nhwc.ca. The author credits the CCA in the preparation of this educational information for use by its members and the public.

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