

HINDMARSH AND FITZROY PHYSIOTHERAPY

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GO FLY.... WITHOUT PAIN! TIPS FOR TRAVELLERS



Everyone loves a holiday, but who doesn't start a holiday feeling a little exhausted? One of the major drawbacks of long distance air travel is that many passengers become very achy and uncomfortable especially when travelling in Economy Class.

However, when that cabin door closes, slumping into your seat, ordering a few drinks and eating your way through the trip may not be the best solution for getting off a flight feeling raring to go. Slumping for hours can make your back and neck ache; not moving and drinking too much alcohol can really slow down your circulation.

TIPS FOR TRAVELLERS- PLAN AHEAD FOR PAIN FREE TRAVEL

The secret to a great flight is really just thinking a little more about what you are doing with your body when you're travelling. According to one survey for every 100 passengers: 14 may feel neck pain, 19 develop back pain while a massive 55 experience both back and neck pain after a plane flight. Only 12% were pain free on arrival.

For some the discomfort is only temporary – once they get up and walk the pain settles. For others the holiday suddenly goes off schedule and they need professional help.

Prevention is often the best solution so consider these simple strategies to help you arrive for your holiday feeling great.



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HEALTH PROFESSIONALS LETTER

Ask for a brief letter for your airline and crew. It may help you negotiate some special consideration i.e. being able to move about more often or given extra blankets and cushions – perhaps your prayers will be answered and you'll be upgraded!

If you do have an ongoing spinal problem then a letter outlining your condition and previous care to take to another health professional may save time and reduce the need for new scans

CONTACT THE AIRLINE

Weeks before you travel advise the airline that you have a medical condition. Many airlines can provide further assistance with wheelchairs, early boarding and collection of luggage. You might request an aisle or bulkhead seat where there is more leg room.

PLAN YOUR FLIGHT

Where possible choose quieter flight times. You might also break up the long legs of international flights by taking a stopover

SIT WELL

Think about how you are sitting. You don't have to sit beautifully all the time, you just have to straighten up regularly and take the load off your spine. If you sit like a banana for 24 hours, don't be surprised if your back doesn't want to straighten up when it is time to get off.

Try these simple sitting tips:

- Tuck your bottom back into the seat a little.
- Slide your pillow behind your mid to low back to give it a little extra support.
- Lift your book or magazine up to your eyes, so your back and neck stay straight.
- Don't cross your legs, it cuts your circulation.
- If you have short legs ask for a pillow or blankets to prop under your feet. Buy a travel pillow/tube to support your neck

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BRING YOUR BACK VITALISER- ASK OUR PHYSIOS

Many travellers have identified the lumbar support of the seat as the main cause of their back pain. You can use the Back Vitalizer as a lumbar support, sit on it or alternate between the two positions according to your comfort.

The controlled air movement within the cushion eases tension, keeps your low back muscles active and makes sitting more comfortable. It helps encourage better posture as well



WORK OUT

Use your travelling time to keep your muscles moving. Try and do a little workout for a few minutes every half hour you are awake.

Circle your feet under the seat

Gently extend and relax your legs under the seat in front of you.

Squeeze and relax your bottom

Roll your shoulders regularly

When you get up to use the bathroom, stand up and down on your toes to really activate your circulation.

STAND AND MOVE

Take advantage of every opportunity to move. Regularly move and stretch out while sitting. Be alert for tension; let your muscles relax. When safe leave your seat and walk, bend and stretch. While waiting to board your flight, stand up. It's amazing how often people slump in the airport lounges with their legs crossed and their neck forward, when they are about to get on a long flight.

Don't use the moving walkways unless you have to, enjoy the exercise.

Always put luggage (even hand luggage) on wheels so you are really mobile.

Walk around while waiting for flights.



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MEDICATION

If you have found over the counter medication helpful in the past, or require stronger prescription medicines, take some with you in your carry-on luggage

LIFT, DON'T LUG

There is nothing worse than finally getting on holiday and then ending up with a bad back from lugging heavy suitcases off carousels.

The main things to remember are:

- Make sure your bags are on wheels.
- If possible, travel light.
- Get as close as possible to luggage carousel and try and lift bags when they are directly in front of you. Do not reach and twist to lift.
- Be careful when lifting luggage out of overhead lockers. Things are often heavier and more awkward than they seem when they are above shoulder height.
- So that's it put a little more thought into your travelling and you may find yourself at the front of those baggage queues feeling fresher and with more energy than when you started your trip.

OTHER RESOURCES

We are passionate about providing our patients and community with information on prevention and management

Please visit our Blogs at hindmarshphysio.com.au for easy access to up to date information on many common conditions

FREE E-BOOK ON MANAGING AND PREVENTING BACK PAIN

We have put together a comprehensive free e-Book guide to understanding and managing back pain, We explain the causes and contributing factors, useful advice and tips on self management, setting up a work station, important exercises and even advice on positions and postures to avoid. [Visit here to download your own copy](#)

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