

# Newsletter

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## Don't Let Muscle Pains, Strains Affect Your Holiday Travel

The American Chiropractic Association

Holiday travel can be tough on your body. Whether driving a few hours to visit the in-laws for Thanksgiving dinner, or flying cross-country for a week-long holiday excursion, you can hardly make the most of your time if the trip leaves you tired, stressed, stiff and sore.

"Long periods of sitting can take a toll on your body," says Dr. Scott Donkin, a chiropractor, ergonomics expert and author of the book, *Sitting on the Job*. "Research shows that sitting in place for prolonged periods of time can decrease blood circulation, stiffen muscles, induce fatigue and, in rare cases, cause blood clots that can lead to life-threatening conditions, like deep vein thrombosis."

The American Chiropractic Association recommends the following in-flight exercises to help travelers avoid muscle tension and stiffness:

### Foot Pumps

Start with both heels on the floor and point your feet upward as high as you can. Return both feet flat on the floor. Then, lift your heels high, keeping balls of feet on the floor. Repeat the three stages in a continuous motion and in 30-second intervals.

### Ankle Circles

Lift one foot off the floor. Draw a circle with your toes 10 times in a clockwise rotation, then 10 times counter-clockwise. Relax. Repeat with the other foot.

### Knee Lifts

While in a seated position –with your back straight and feet flat on the floor –lift the right foot a few inches off the floor while keeping the knee bent at 90 degrees. Alternate legs. Repeat 20 to 30 times for each leg.

### Shoulder Rolls

Gently roll your shoulders forward, up, back and down. Repeat in the reverse direction. Repeat several times.

### Neck Rolls

With your shoulders relaxed, drop one ear to your shoulder and gently roll your neck forward and back, holding each position about five seconds. Repeat five times.

In addition, keep your blood flowing by walking up and down the aisle periodically, when permitted by aircraft personnel; keep your legs uncrossed; wear comfortable clothing; and drink plenty of water.

"Because travel can completely change your regular routine, it can be very tough on your body and stressful, too. See your chiropractor to help assure healthy travel," says Dr. Donkin. "He or she is trained to diagnose and relieve problems of the spine and nervous system."

