

## Five-Minute Stress Relief.com

### Air Travel Tips

#### Preparation

##### Airport Shuttle Service

If you (and your partner) are traveling by plane, it may be best to use an airport shuttle service in order to avoid the toil of driving to the airport, finding long-term parking and carrying all your bags up to the airport luggage handlers. Otherwise, leave yourself plenty of extra time to drive to the plane. Plan to sit have some beverages before your flight because generally there's a very limited supply of fluids available on long flights.

##### Fly Early

It's usually best to book the first flight available in the day (or for adults, the red eye at night). This way, if there are delays (which are very common) you have a better chance of arriving that day, with your luggage.

##### Have Ready Supplies

If you travel several times a year, why not have a complete set of toiletries and personal supplies already packed in a plastic pouch ready to go when you need it. Transportation Security Administration regulations state that each passenger's hand luggage contains products of 3 ounces each (or less) that fit in a quart-size clear plastic bag. When you return home, jot down any helpful hints you picked up on the trip.

##### Fine Tuning

For privacy and quiet, ask for a window seat (no passengers need to get by you). For longer legs in coach class, ask for an aisle seat. Bring eye mask, sponge earplugs or noise-canceling headphones for snoozing. Dress in loose, comfortable clothes for comfort.

##### Anticipating Lost Luggage

The statistics for lost luggage for the last few years is so *staggering* and commonplace, there's no need to alert you to this reality. However are you prepared?

##### How To Protect Yourself

- Put your ID information on the outside **and inside** –in a very visible place.
- Carry a picture of your bag to show airline personnel if it's lost or **damaged**.
- If you're traveling with companions, share luggage space with each other. That way, if a bag is lost, you both have some clothes to wear. Pack **all valuables** in your carry-on luggage!
- If bags are lost, file a complaint immediately. To report the airline contact: *DOT Aviation Consumer Protection: 400 Seventh Street, S.W. #4107, Washington D.C., 20590, (202) 366-4000.*

##### Altitude Sickness Symptoms

New research, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, has found that 3 hours of air travel cabin pressure often triggered symptoms of shortness of breath, light-headedness, backaches, headaches and impaired coordination. Previously these symptoms were chalked up to jet lag, dehydration, air contamination or being a victim of cramped seating for hours.

##### Dehydration

Airplane cabins at cruising altitude can have a humidity factor of 10 to 20%! (Equivalent to a desert environment.) In addition, doctors point out that because of dried-up mucous membranes,

you're more vulnerable to infection (also the closed air system of re-circulated air contains abundant bacteria levels from the hundreds of passengers). What can you do? Consume abundant fluids before boarding, and stay away from caffeinated and alcoholic beverages that have a diuretic effect on your body.

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**Sources: A Stress-Free Vacation** *New York Times* Debra A Klein ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)) **U.S. Dept. of Transportation** *SafeTravel.dot.gov* (<http://safetravel.dot.gov/index.html>) **Effect of Aircraft-Cabin Altitude on Passenger Discomfort** *New England Journal of Medicine* Volume 357:18-27 July 5, 2007 Number 1 **Air Travel What About More Water?** *New York Times* August 27, 2006 ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com))