



Exercises for Travelers

Excited about going on vacation? While traveling is fun, simply getting to a vacation destination—whether by plane, train, bus or car—often involves extended periods of immobility. Hours of inactivity associated with air travel—first in the airport waiting lounge and then on the plane—may leave you achy and sore before your vacation has even begun!

To help combat potential problems associated with traveling, try these suggestions below from Laurie Leiber, MPH, who earned her master's degree in public health from the University of California, Berkeley, and who teaches Pilates in Oakland, California.

Seated Exercises

What can you do when you are virtually held captive in boarding lounges at the airport? Perform these exercises that all begin with the following sustainable seated posture:

- Place feet flat on floor, parallel, a few inches apart.
- Sit up on sit bones.
- Tip pelvis to bring it vertical (neutral spine position).
- Drop shoulders away from ears and lengthen back of neck.

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Coach Ken Johnson
coachken@3-fitness.com
www.3-fitness.com

- Breathe in, and on exhalation, draw in abdominals, engaging the core. Return to this position between each seated exercise.

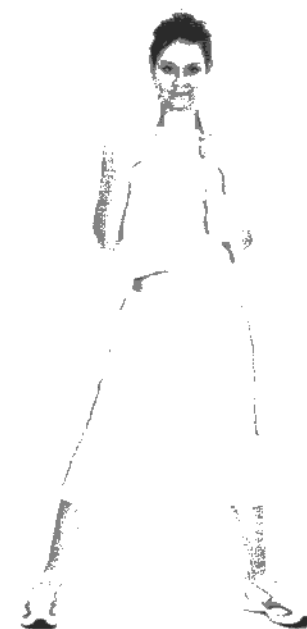
Figure-Four Stretch. Place one ankle on top of opposite knee. Hinge forward at hips, keeping spine neutral. Hold for 15–30 seconds, feeling a deep stretch on outside of hip. Repeat on other side.

Seated Twist (Not for People With Disk Problems). Keeping knees and hips facing front, reach around to one side with both hands and hold onto back of chair. Breathe in. On exhalation, rotate rib cage and look over back of chair while keeping as much length in spine as possible. Hold stretch for 10–15 seconds. Return to start position and repeat, twisting to other side.

Shoulder Shrug and Roll. Inhale as you lift shoulders up toward ears. Exhale as you roll shoulders back and down, opening chest and letting shoulder blades come together. Continue sliding shoulders down the back, away from ears. Repeat 3–5 times.

Neck Stretch. With chin slightly tucked, let right ear drop toward right shoulder. Hold stretch for 3–4 breaths, letting weight of head stretch left side of neck. Gently release stretch and repeat on other side.

Rock the Baby. With right hand on left elbow and left hand on right elbow, hold folded arms out in front of chest. Draw right elbow as far as you can to the right to stretch outside of left shoulder. Draw left elbow as far as you can to the left to stretch outside of right shoulder. Repeat 2–3 times on each side. ■



Standing Room Only

Waiting to clear airport security is just the first of many times travelers stand in line in the course of a trip. Make good use of any waiting time with these standing exercises.

Footwork. Stand with feet parallel, 2–3 inches apart, balancing weight equally on both feet. Come up onto balls of feet, and slowly lower heels to floor, keeping weight centered. Repeat 8–10 times.

Prancing in Place. Use same start position as in exercise above. Come up onto balls of feet. Lower one heel to floor while keeping other heel raised. Alternately press one heel up as other heel comes down to floor. Repeat 12–15 times.

Knee Lift. Keeping hips level, raise one knee until thigh is parallel to floor. Maintain neutral spine, and balance in this position 15–30 seconds. Place foot back on floor and repeat balance on other side. (You can also balance on standing leg, slowly raising and lowering knee, touching toe to floor.)

Roll-Down. Bring chin to chest and slowly roll down, one vertebra at a time until spine is flexed forward, arms hanging toward floor. Bend knees slightly and roll up, stacking vertebrae one at a time, bringing head up last. Repeat 2–3 times.