

# Staying Safe and Healthy While Traveling

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**No matter how you travel**—by car, plane, or train—being on the go can take its toll on your physical and mental health. But being aware of body mechanics can help you get to where you're going with minimal strain and pain.

Occupational therapists can offer traveling tips that will help you make the most out of your trip without causing you undue stress.

## What can a traveler do to stay safe?

- **Lift luggage correctly.** Whether loading bags in and out of the car or on and off the baggage carousel, be sure to lift with your legs. Carry weight close to your body and distribute weight evenly. Do not lift luggage that is too heavy: Ask for help.
- **Use a footrest.** Set your feet on your carry-on bag to keep your legs at a 90-degree angle. Don't let your legs dangle.
- **Move around when permitted.** If taking a long flight, move around the cabin when you're permitted so you can stretch your arms and legs.
- **Take stretch breaks.** Sitting in the car too long can cause fatigue, backaches, and neck and shoulder stiffness. When traveling by car, give yourself enough time—even if it's just a few minutes—to make stops on long trips to stand up, stretch, and walk around.
- **Use cruise control.** Take the pressure off the right side of your body—your accelerator and brake pad side—by using your cruise control when driving.
- **Maintain a healthy diet.** If you are on a special diet and are traveling, make arrangements in advance with airlines or other travel companies to ensure that you receive appropriate meals.
- **Plan activities for children.** Pack snacks, games, and other activities to keep children occupied and entertained.
- **Request special assistance.** If you need special assistance when traveling on a commercial airline, notify airline officials in advance of special accommodations you may need such as a wheelchair, stroller, or other mobility device.

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## Need more information?

Traveling safely is important in staying physically and emotionally healthy. Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are trained in helping both adults and children with a broad range of physical, developmental, and psychological conditions. Practitioners also offer clients wellness techniques that

may prevent injury and disease. If you would like to consult an occupational therapist, practitioners are available through most hospitals, medical centers, and community clinics. Contact your local health officials for more information.

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