



Chiropractic - Acupuncture - Nutrition

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Tips for Traveling with Joint Pain

As we approach the holiday season, many people will be traveling to parts of the country with different weather. If you suffer from joint pain, the trip and stress of traveling along with the change of climate can take a toll on you. Airports, train stations and bus stations provide accommodations for people with disabilities but your trip may still come with some unexpected aches and pains. If this is your first holiday season with a significant injury, it may seem daunting to think about how you will need to navigate the airport or other transportation stations. Everyone should understand these essential steps for preventing a new or worsening an existing injury during their holiday travel.

Posture in Vehicles

I generally advise people to get up and move about once every 20-30 minutes. Traveling can make this difficult, but if you're driving or riding in a car, take advantage of rest stops at least once every 60-90 minutes - yes, this will lengthen your drive but it may save a significant flare up of an old injury. People who are seated should be mindful of their posture and avoid sitting with a foot tucked under themselves or leaning their head or back at odd angles when napping in the car. Drivers should use cruise control as much as possible and try to shift in their seat often to alleviate any points of stress. Drivers should also regularly change the position of their hands on the steering wheel and keep their chairs pushed back enough to stretch their legs. It is recommended that passengers keep their heads up while seated, instead of looking down at a screen or book. Although travelers on an airplane, train or bus don't get as many opportunities to stretch while in transit, they can still do stretching exercises before their departure and make sure

to get up and move around once per hour. Even doing some static muscle contractions while seated has been shown to help decrease the risk of blood clots. Keep in mind that this is not the time to try any advanced new stretches you've never attempted before, keep it simple and remember that just plain *movement* is key.

Sitting for Long Periods

I often encourage people to avoid carrying heavy objects whenever possible, especially if they will be carrying them for long periods of time...like through an airport. Ideally, travelers will avoid adding more back strain by using wheeled bags. Also, don't be afraid to ask for help if you are worried about getting your carry-on bag in the overhead bin. When sitting for long periods of time I advise people to use a neck pillow and to have a small, cylindrical pillow in the small of their backs. You can also improvise a cylindrical pillow by rolling up a blanket or sweatshirt. Travelers should also wear supportive shoes and clothing that allows their blood to circulate without restriction, or supportive braces, as advised by their chiropractor or other doctor. If renting a car, consider a full-size model or larger and make sure the seats are adjustable and ask if the vehicle has cruise control as well..

At Your Destination

Your holiday destination might have more sunlight this time of year than you are used to - so plan accordingly with hats and long-sleeved shirts. Maintain any recommended chiropractic regimen of low-impact range-of-motion exercises and eat enough produce to sustain your nutrition. Those with inflammatory conditions should avoid excess sugar and alcohol, but favor olive oil and cruciferous vegetables such as brussels sprouts, cauliflower, broccoli and kale - if well tolerated. This is not the time to try too many new foods as many holiday foods (with excess sugar, gluten, dairy, etc. are known to be inflammatory and can worsen any painful conditions).

Remember to allow extra time for traveling if you are injured or are traveling with somebody who is injured. Enjoy your holidays and stay healthy this winter!