

**Ah, travel!** Whether it be for joyous occasions, tragedy, work, or “just because,” each year we log countless miles traveling the roads, rails, and friendly skies. How can we minimize the risks, inconveniences, and aches associated with travel? Here are some facts and tips, courtesy of the Unified Virginia Chiropractic Association.

Some people fear flying. Despite fears of catastrophe, each flight segment we take is relatively safer than a trip behind the wheel by a significant margin<sup>1,2</sup>; however, all modes of travel carry risks -- especially sedentary travel. Sitting itself can be fatal. Sedentary travel, such as sitting on an airplane, correlates with almost 3 times the risk of a dangerous clot from the legs (venous thromboembolism) that can travel to the lungs and kill.<sup>3</sup> The solution is simple: **MOVE**. Here are some tips that work, whether you're seated in first class or packed like a sardine:

- **Fidget.** The proposed mechanism for the so-called “economy class syndrome”<sup>4</sup> is stasis or stagnation of blood flow. Move in your chair, or walk the aisle when feasible.
- **Hydrate** well and you'll not only keep your blood thin and less sticky, but you'll also inspire walks to the lavatory.
- Some doctors suggest **compression stockings** for at-risk groups (though these are no substitute for the measures listed above).

When you're the driver -- whether you fly your own jet, or drive the Jetta -- be alert. If you're sleep deprived, your reaction times will be slowed and you risk falling asleep at the wheel. In one year, almost 2 million Americans had an automobile crash or near miss due to sleep deprivation and fatigue.<sup>5</sup> Get proper rest. If necessary, pull off the road to a safe area. A little dose of shut-eye could save your life.

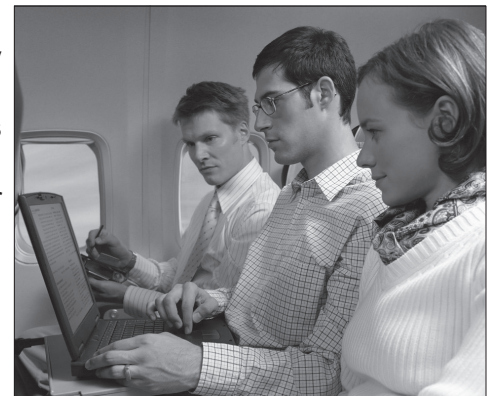
Speaking of risks on the road, be wise with the gadgets in your car. From iPods to cell phones, distractions cause many, many accidents. Even hands-free devices and speech-to-text functions allow devices to distract you from the critical business of driving. Consider holding off on sending that text; and “hang up and drive” when traffic is complex or road conditions are challenging.

While on the road, consider bringing your own pillow. Though an uncomfortable bed, futon, or fold-out cot can wreak havoc on your body, at least you can bring your functionally-correct, orthopedic pillow along. Don't have a proper pillow to support your neck, protect your shoulders, minimize snoring, and ensure a good night's sleep? Your doctor of chiropractic can guide you in the right direction.

Speaking of your doctor of chiropractic: When your trip is over, consider a visit to work out the “kinks.” Doctors of chiropractic are extensively trained in the human frame and nervous system, and are uniquely qualified to help you feel and FUNCTION at your best. For more information on ways to help your family live better, ask your doctor of chiropractic for guidance; or visit <http://virginiachiropractic.org> to find a highly-qualified chiropractor near you.

**References:**

- <sup>1</sup> [http://transportation.northwestern.edu/docs/0000/Sivak\\_Abstract.pdf](http://transportation.northwestern.edu/docs/0000/Sivak_Abstract.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.fearofflying.com/about/research.shtml>
- <sup>3</sup> Divay Chandra, MD et al. “Meta-analysis: Travel and Risk for Venous Thromboembolism.” *Annals of Internal Medicine*, August 4, 2009. Vol. 151, no. 3: 180-190
- <sup>4</sup> Symington IS, Stack BHR. Pulmonary thromboembolism after travel. *Br J Chest* 1977; 17:138-140
- <sup>5</sup> National Sleep Foundation's 2009 Sleep in America poll, as quoted at <http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/press-release/19-million-drivers-have-fatigue-related-car-crashes-or-near-misses-each-year>



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