



Airport Exercises

When it comes to staying pain free when flying, the following are the biggest factors to contend with:

- Muscle tightness from being cramped in a plane for hours on end.
- Poor circulation from not moving during a flight.
- Reduced oxygen delivery to the body from not breathing properly when hunched over in an airplane.

One way to reduce the impact of these unavoidable and unwelcomed side effects of flying is to take a proactive approach. **Exercises that promote mobility, circulation, and breathing can be done during your layover or while waiting for your luggage.** The following series of exercises is designed to do just that. If possible, remove your shoes to help with blood flow and circulation to your feet, and be sure to stay hydrated.

Duration: 10 minutes. If you don't have 10 minutes, do what you have time for. One minute of functional movement and breathing is better than none.

Equipment needed: A chair

Sitting Scapular Retractions

Reps: 30 reps

Purpose: Combat slouching by activating and strengthening shoulder and upper back muscles.

Instructions:

1. Sit in the middle of a chair with your feet pointed straight ahead, 4-6 inches apart.
2. Roll your hips forward to place an arch in your low back and hold throughout the exercise.
3. Squeeze and release your shoulder blades together. Squeeze back and down, NOT up and down.

Breathing With Hands Behind Head

Reps: Hold for 10 breaths

Purpose: Opens up the thoracic spine (upper back) and delivers oxygen to the body.

Instructions:

1. Sit in the middle of a chair with your feet pointed straight ahead, 4-6 inches apart.
2. Roll your hips forward to place an arch in your low back.
3. Interlace your fingers behind your head, pull your elbows back and pull your shoulder blades together.
4. Keep your chin up and relax your belly. Maintain this position for the duration of the exercise.
5. Breathe intentionally into your ribs so that your ribs expand outward with each inhalation.

Sitting Elbow Curls

Reps: 25 reps

Purpose: Improve shoulder mobility by moving your shoulder blades through a full range of motion.

Instructions:

1. Sit in the middle of a chair with your feet pointed straight ahead, 4-6 inches apart.
2. Roll your hips forward to place an arch in your low back.
3. Place your fingertips into the pad of each hand and point your thumbs straight out. Place your big knuckles on your temples.
4. Hold this starting position; then pull your elbows away from each other to force your upper back muscles to create the work. Do not lose your hip position; keep them rolled forward and maintain the arch in your low back.
5. Pull your elbows back and then close them together in front of your face. Keep your elbows up at shoulder level; do not let them drop down.

Sitting Leg Crossover Stretch

Reps: Hold for 1 minute on each leg

Purpose: Stretch and activate the hips.

Instructions:

1. Sit in the middle of a chair with your feet pointed straight ahead, 4-6 inches apart.
2. Roll your hips forward to place an arch in your low back.
3. Cross your right leg over your left so that your anklebone is just above your knee.
4. Using the strength of your hip (not your hands) press the knee of the crossed leg downward towards the floor.
5. Breathe and hold for 1 minute, then switch sides and repeat. Maintain an arch in your low back for the duration of the exercise.

Sitting Foot Circles and Point Flexes

Reps: Circle 10 times on each foot going in the following three directions: clockwise, counter clockwise, and point and flex. Switch sides and repeat.

Purpose: Mobilize the feet and lower legs, and promote circulation.

Instructions:

1. Sit in the middle of a chair with your feet pointed straight ahead, 4-6 inches apart.
2. Roll your hips forward to place an arch in your low back.
3. Cross your right leg over your left so that your anklebone is just above your knee.
4. Circle the foot of your crossed leg clockwise 10 times, counter clockwise 10 times, and point/flex 10 times.
5. Switch sides and repeat. Make your foot circles as big and full as possible. Pretend you are scraping out the inside of an ice cream bowl. The slower and more deliberate the better.



Hotel Room Exercises

Whether you're traveling for fun or business, you may not have the time or the resources to maintain your full health and fitness regimen. **Regardless of your constraints, you can still make time for this quick full body routine.** The best time of day to do these exercises is first thing in the morning so that you can go about your day with better alignment and feel energized for your day.

Duration: 10 minutes. If you don't have 10 minutes, do what you have time for. One minute of functional movement is better than none!

Equipment needed: A chair and a pillow.

Standing Arm Circles

Reps: 40 forward, 40 backward

Purpose: Straighten out the upper back by moving the shoulders through internal and external rotation.

Instructions:

1. Stand with your feet pointed straight and hip-width apart.
2. Place your fingertips into the pad of each hand and point your thumbs straight out.
3. Pull your shoulders back by squeezing your shoulder blades together and down, then bring your arms out straight from your sides up to shoulder level.
4. With palms facing down and thumbs pointing straight forward rotate your hands up and forward in approximate 6-inch circles 40 times.
5. Then reverse direction: palms should now face up, with thumbs pointed straight backward. Rotate your hands up and backward 40 times.

Standing Elbow Curls

Reps: 30

Purpose: Improve shoulder mobility by moving your shoulder blades through a full range of motion.

Instructions:

1. Stand with your feet pointed straight and hip-width apart.
2. Place your fingertips into the pad of each hand and point your thumbs straight out.
3. Place your big knuckles on your temples.
4. Hold this starting position; then pull your elbows away from each other to force your upper back muscles to create tension.
5. Pull your elbows back and then close them together in front of your face. Keep your elbows up at shoulder level, do not let them drop down. Do not let your head move forward and back like you are bobbing for apples. If you have a hard time keeping your head still, do this exercise standing up against a wall.

Down Dog with Chair

Reps: Hold for 1 minute

Purpose: Improve mobility through the thoracic spine and activate the muscles of the hips and legs.

Instructions:

1. Stand facing the back of a chair.
2. Keep your feet pointed straight and place your hands on the back of the chair.
3. Walk your feet back so that your feet are under your hips. Keep the hips, knees, and feet in alignment.
4. Kick your buttocks/hips back to place an arch in your lower back.
5. Keep your elbows locked out and tighten your quads. Keep your feet straight for the duration of the exercise.

Assisted Runners Stretch

Reps: Hold for 1 minute on each leg

Purpose: Stretch the hamstrings and stabilize the hips.

Instructions:

1. Kneel down in front of a chair.
2. Place the back of your left heel to the front of the right knee. Be sure that you are up on the toes of your right foot, with the bottom of the foot pointing behind you. Keep the left foot, right knee, and right foot in line with each other.
3. Keeping your hands on the chair stand up and begin bending over while rolling your hips back to place an arch into your lower back. The heel of your right foot should now be on the ground and the feet should remain straight.
4. Tighten your thighs (quads) while relaxing your upper body. Keep your weight on the inside of each foot and keep your lower back arched. Hold for one minute on each side.

Sitting Knee Pillow Squeezes

Reps: 60

Purpose: Mobilize and stabilize the pelvis and low back.

Instructions:

1. Sit in the middle of a chair with your feet pointed straight ahead, 4-6 inches apart.
2. Place a pillow between your knees.
3. Roll your hips forward to place an arch in your low back and hold this position throughout the exercise.
4. Squeeze and release the pillow with your knees. Keep your stomach relaxed for the duration of this exercise.

Cats and Dogs

Reps: 10, counting 1 Cat and 1 Dog as 1 total rep

Purpose: Mobilize the hips, spine and shoulders.

Instructions:

1. Start on your hands and knees. Be sure that your hips are directly above your knees and that your shoulders are directly above your wrist. Fingers should be pointed forward.
2. For the Cat position: Pull your hips under, pull your head under and push your upper back to the ceiling to round your back up high.
3. For the Dog position: Roll your hips forward to put an arch in your back, collapse your shoulder blades together and look up.
4. Slowly move back and forth between the Cat and Dog positions and breathe normally.

Airbench

Reps: Hold for 2 minutes

Purpose: Stabilizes the hips and low back.

Instructions:

1. Safety comes first and traction on your feet is a priority here. Only do this if you can wear non-slip shoes to or if you can stand on a non-slip surface.
2. Stand with your back against a wall with your feet and knees hip width apart and feet pointed straight.
3. Walk your feet away from the wall while sliding your body down at the same time. You will be "seated" in an invisible chair, with your knees bent to 105 degrees (just above 90 degrees). Your hips are just slightly higher than your knees; your ankles are slightly ahead of your knees. Your lower back should be completely flat against the wall. Your arms can hang down to your sides, or rest your hands gently on your lap. Keep the weight in your heels, do not press forward on your toes.