



6 SUMMER TRAVEL TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR BACK

School's out, the weather is warm and you are ready to travel this summer. Here are some important tips to keep in mind to make sure your summer plans don't become a pain in your back.



1 BRING A LUMBAR SUPPORT PILLOW.

Whether it's a plane, train or automobile, you will want to make sure that you have enough support for your spine for those long rides. If you don't have a lumbar pillow, you can make your own out of a rolled-up towel or blanket.



2 BE CAREFUL LIFTING LUGGAGE AND CARRYING YOUR BAGS.

Always bend at your knees when lifting luggage, not at your back. Avoid twisting your body when lifting heavy objects. For shoulder bags, be sure to switch sides often to prevent repetitive leaning to one side. And don't be afraid to ask for help when something is too heavy for you to lift alone.



3 TAKE TIME TO MOVE, STRETCH AND CHANGE POSITIONS.

Moving helps to circulate our blood, keep our muscles warm and prevent stiffness. For long car rides, take frequent stops to walk and stretch the back and leg muscles. For plane rides, aim to get out of your seat every 30 minutes to an hour.



4 DON'T FORGET TO REST!

Sometimes the opposite is true on vacations—we are so busy walking through an amusement park or touring a new city that we forget to take a break. Taking a break to sit or do some deep stretches of the neck, back and leg muscles will help to keep you feeling good for the duration of your trip.



5 STAY HYDRATED.

Drinking plenty of water is not only important for keeping your body temperature down in the heat, but it is an important part of spine health. The cartilage that makes up the spinal discs and joints are 80% water, so staying well-hydrated helps to cushion and protect your spine.



6 GO SWIMMING.

If you have access to a pool at home or on a trip, grab your suit and jump in! Swimming is a great exercise for the back. Since the buoyancy of the water makes you nearly weightless, you don't put pressure on your spine or joints.