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Traveling Exercises

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Sitting in one position, as in car or airplane travel, for prolonged periods of time affects us in several ways. It:

- Weakens our stomach and back muscles
- Compounds lower back problems
- Reduces range of motion, causing inflexible joints
- Contributes to poor circulation

Tension tends to build up in the hands, shoulders, neck, and back. It's no surprise that you feel so stiff and tired. If you are traveling by R.V. or in a car, stop and take a stroll every few hours. Exercise is the most natural way to combat soreness and exhaustion, and also to avoid the inevitable lack of energy. You might think traveling by plane or train is too confining to do strengthening and stretching exercises, but here are a few simple routines to keep you limber the next time you are away from home.

Seated Traveling Exercises

Back Stretch Warm-Up: Interlace fingers with palms turned away and push the arms forward at shoulder height until you feel the back stretching. Unlace fingers and press upper arms into the back of seat. Squeeze the shoulder blades and then release. Now touch the top of shoulders with your hands and lift elbows up to shoulder level. Bring elbows together in front to touch, then open slowly bringing elbows as far back as comfortable, so that you feel a gentle stretch across the chest. Do this 2 times.

Finger Walk & Back Massage: Placing hands on top of shoulders, lift elbows up and return to starting position. Do this 3 times, lifting elbows higher each time. The third time, use 2 or 3 fingers to walk down the back, gently digging fingers into the

muscles as you walk them. Now slide fingers back to shoulders with a gentle pulling motion on the muscle, producing a massaging sensation. This loosens up muscle and connective tissue. Now with hands on shoulders again, walk hands back until almost at center of spine. Then slide hands forward, returning to collar bone. Gently massage back and forth across chest just under collar bone.

Thymus Tap: To strengthen your immune system, find your thymus gland. To locate it, find the notch where the collarbones meet and measure about 2 inches below the notch. Using 3 fingers, gently tap that 'magic spot' 5 times every day.

Posture Stretch: With elbows bent, put hands on thighs, palms down. Straighten arms by sliding hands down top of thigh. Push hands into thighs, which should automatically lift chest and pull the neck back over the shoulders. This is an excellent way to straighten a sagging posture.

Semi-Pretzel: Place right hand on hip and with left hand, reach across body and rest hand on right mid-thigh. Now pull thigh with left hand, lengthen spine, and look over right shoulder. Hold for a count of 3. Repeat on left side.

Samba Shoulders: With feet together, rock toes and heels back and forth several times. Now with heels lifted, come up on toes and cup palms on each knee. Straighten arm and push right knee so that right heel is down to floor. At the same time pull left shoulder back. Keep alternating this movement 4 to 8 times.

Back Stretch For Confined Spaces: Rest hands on thighs. Keeping spine straight, lean forward from hip with chest and chin lifted. Feel the stretch starting from the tailbone (coccyx) up through the back. You'll notice a tiny arch in the small of the back. Place both hands on the arch, sit up tall and pull elbows back to stretch the front of your chest.

SitandBeFit is a non-profit organization committed to healthy aging advocacy. We believe everyone has the right to feel good and age well. We empower people to improve their lives through safe, effective, media-based health and wellness programming.

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