

## WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK THIS SUMMER!

The summer holidays are upon us! Schools may have only just broken up, but in the first weekend of the school holidays alone, around 1.9million Brits<sup>1</sup> jetted off for an overseas holiday.

A holiday is a break from the norm except, according to the British Chiropractic Association, **one in three people suffers from back pain** whilst on holiday.

Whether it's the dream departure of a lifetime or just a weekend city break for some much-needed escapism - holidaying is good for the soul. But there could be health hazards awaiting you - a combination of suitcases, sleep and sunloungers could play havoc with your spine.

The British Chiropractic Association is advising a bit of forward-planning to help keep your spine healthy on holiday. BCA chiropractor, Tim Hutchful says "There are a number of potential pitfalls both before and during your holidays which can lead to back pain, but the good news is these are easy to avoid"

Tim continues 'Holidays are one of the best ways to relax and rejuvenate however, people all too often injure themselves as their body is out of its usual routine; just picking up a suitcase the wrong way or lying on a sun lounger in an awkward position can result in pain.'

Here are some of Tim's top tips to follow before and during your holidays...

### **Before you go....**

- **Suitcase selection** – choose wisely and buy the lightest case possible that has wheels. Hard cases can sometimes weigh a lot even with nothing in them.
- **Two cases are better than one** - If possible, take two light suitcases rather than one so you can distribute the weight more effectively.
- **Push, don't pull!** Many wheeled cases encourage you to pull the case handle from behind but this makes the upper body/back twist. Instead, push the case in front of you.
- **Get a good night's sleep** – travelling when tired increases your chances of injury, so make sure you sleep well the night before a flight and avoid rushing around.

### **Up, Up and Away....**

- **Flying high** - If you are flying drink plenty of soft drinks and NOT alcohol during the flight as this will cause dehydration, which can aggravate muscle pain.

- **Air-exercise** – you will be restricted to your seat for most of the flight but avoid stiffness by doing shoulder shrugs, buttock clenches and foot circles.

#### Arrivals...

- **Avoid 'travelators'** – get your joints moving quickly after a flight and walk through the terminal rather than opting for the easy option of a moving walkway.
- **Round and round** – ensure your bag is easily identifiable (e.g. knot a ribbon around the handle) to avoid lifting other people's heavy cases off the carousel in error.
- **Steer clear of trolleys** – unless your case does not have wheels of its own, try not to use airport trolleys. Wonky wheels are common and you could hurt your back trying to correct a wayward trolley.

#### At Your Destination...

- **Bed down at the hotel** - When you get to your hotel and find the bed is too hard, use a blanket or ask hotel staff for an extra duvet to put between you and the mattress. Firm beds are not always best, but it is easier to make a hard bed softer than a soft bed harder.
- **Lounging around** - if you are heading to the sun lounger in search of that perfect tan, try not to lie on your tummy with your back and neck arched back to read a book. Put the book on the floor and read over the edge of the sun bed as this should allow you to have your head and neck in a more neutral position.
- **Exercise in safety** – if keeping in shape is on your holiday agenda, ensure you have a full induction to the hotel gym equipment, just as you would at home.

Keep these tips in mind and you'll be well on your way to a pain-free and enjoyable holiday!

For more information call the BCA on 0118 950 5950 or visit [www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk](http://www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk) where there is practical advice to help avoid back problems and improve posture.

**Ends**

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