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Body Dynamics Newsletter July 2010

## Enjoy Vacation Season, Without Travel Pains

Ashley Templer, MPT, OCS, MTC

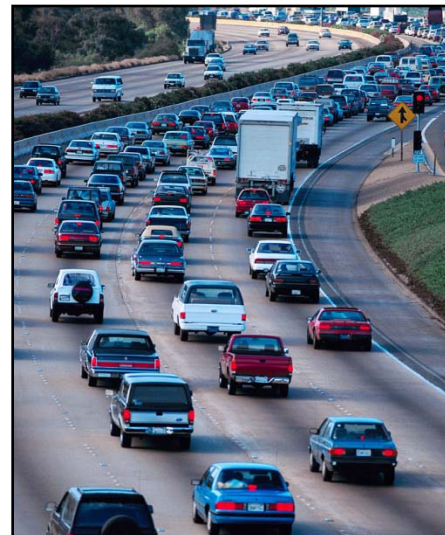
Edited by Kym Laird

**In** this heat and humidity, nothing seems more refreshing than a holiday away at the breezy beach. Of course, the long driving, flying and packing time can leave our bodies achy and sore – long after we are supposed to have left our worries behind! This summer, enjoy your vacation without the pain! Read on for tips and tricks for preventing traveling soreness.

### **Driving:**

Why do we feel so tired and stiff after long drives? Well, lengthy sitting dehydrates our connective tissues. This means the discs in our spine provide less cushioning, and our muscles and joints have less lubrication. For some this can leave them feeling restricted long into the vacation or after the return home. Don't want to look like Frankenstein trudging around the beach? Try a few of these tips:

- **Plan extra time to get there!**
  - o This will reduce stress and allow you to stop and get out every hour to walk and stretch for 10 minutes.
  - o Taking the time to move your body will prevent stiffness and soreness
- **Switch drivers as often as possible.**
  - o When everyone chips in, it's easier on everybody!
- **Take your wallet and cell phone out of your pockets.**
  - o The bulk can compress on the sciatic nerve or put you in an asymmetrical position, creating stress on your low back.
- **Try a tush-cush! [www.tushcush.com](http://www.tushcush.com)**
  - o Car seats are quite often bucket seats, which mean they slope down and back so when you sit your hips end up lower than your knees. This rotates the pelvis back, making it impossible to assume a neutral sitting posture.
  - o A tush-cush improves the hip to knee angle and makes it easier to



It can be hard to stop in the holiday rush, but your body will thank you if you take time to stretch.

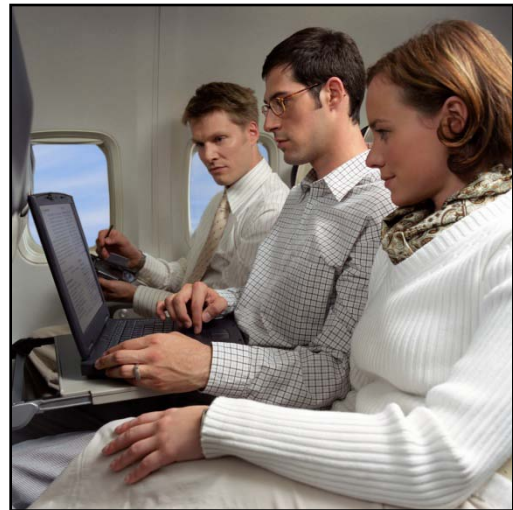
sit on a neutral pelvis. If nothing else, try a small pillow or towel roll for added support!

[Read on for flying tips...]

## **Flying**

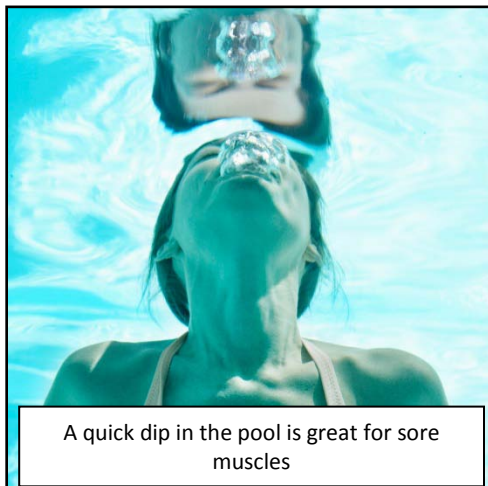
- **Book an aisle seat!**
  - o This means getting up and walking the aisle will be easier. Try to move every 30 minutes to prevent stiffness.
- **Lift your bag in stages:**
  - o First to the top of the seat, pause, and then to the overhead compartment
  - o Keep your neutral spine, draw in your abdominals, hinge your hips, bend your knees, and exhale with exertion
- **Use your jacket or pillow to act as an easily transported tush cushion!**
  - o Roll it in a U-shape and place it just behind and around your sit bones to give you the support you need.

- **For both air and road travel, staying hydrated by drinking plenty of water is important.**



## **After you arrive**

- **Take a warm bath or shower to ease those muscles**
- **If possible, schedule a massage – it's a great start to the vacation and works out those strained muscles.**



A quick dip in the pool is great for sore muscles

- **Quick warm-Up**
  - o If you have a home exercise program from your physical therapist, this is the perfect time to devote 20-30 minutes to finding your neutral spine, engaging your core and stretching your pecs, hamstrings and hip flexors
- **Jump in!**
  - o If you have access to a pool, get in it as soon as possible, float, walk and swim easy laps, to counter the stiffness from travel.
- **Pace yourself as you start the activities of your trip.**
  - o Allow one day to recover from the drive or flight, it will go a long way.

**Schedule a session with your physical therapist personal trainer or massage therapist for your return date, so that you return to work truly refreshed from your much anticipated and deserved summer vacation!**