

TRAVEL

How to Treat Your Feet When Traveling

NewsUSA

(NU) - They say getting there is half the fun. But if you anticipate long hours on the road, on the tracks or in the air, getting there can be the worst part of your trip.

Chalk it up to tight transportation quarters, uncomfortable clothes, pinching shoes or cramped positions. In fact, inactivity and sitting in one position for prolonged periods, as many people do while traveling, can stiffen muscles and hinder circulation. This inactivity can also cause health problems such as swelling of the feet and blood clots in the legs.

Finding relief and relaxation during your journey — and at your destination — can be as simple as knowing how to treat your feet. Moving and stretching your feet and legs and wearing proper footwear can help keep your circulation in check.

Give your feet — and yourself — a little tender loving care with these simple travel tips from the American Podiatric Medical Association.

- **Work out right in your seat.** Sprinting through the aisle may be out of the question, but physical activity is possible without irking other passengers, thanks to simple foot exercises.

Rotate each foot several times clockwise and counterclockwise, then repeat. Flex your toes up and down, working your calves. If

room permits, try raising each knee, holding it there for a few seconds and tensing your thigh muscle. Or, simply wiggle your toes.

- **Stay mobile.** On a plane, when the pilot invites you to move about the cabin, take him up on it. Experts recommend stretching your legs and walking around at least once an hour. Request an aisle seat, if possible, to facilitate movement.

- **Wear comfortable footwear.** While traveling, loosen your shoelaces or take off your shoes. To keep swollen feet at bay during long flights, try wearing supportive elastic stockings. Pack supportive shoes and socks, especially if your vacation calls for plenty of sightseeing on foot.

If a special evening calls for high heels, wear heels no higher than 1.5 inches. Heed podiatrists' rule of thumb: the wider the heel, the more support. For men, a pair of quality oxfords offers comfort during a night of dancing.

What should you do with new shoes that haven't been broken in? It's best to leave them at home.

- **Cool your heels.** Pack a spa kit for your feet, complete with foot lotion for a soothing massage, a foot brush and pedicure materials for use after a full day of walking around.

For more information on foot care, visit www.apma.org.