



How to keep “airport anxiety” from flying out of control

Traveling Americans are finding stricter airport screening, long waits, security checks, random searches—and you’re not even off the ground yet. Prepare yourself mentally and physically for the added stress. The Pennsylvania Medical Society offers these tips for avoiding airport anxiety:

Know what to expect. Get information about airport rules from your travel agent, the airline, or online travel sites.

Don’t prime the anxiety pump. Why work yourself into a frazzle before you even reach the airport? Give yourself plenty of time to get there. Allow for normal delays, like traffic jams and road closings, and for new ones such as restricted airport access.

Come equipped to wait it out. Bring a folding canvas seat or arrange with the airport for a wheelchair. Pack snacks in your carryon. Also carry your prescription medications with you along with any special dietary snacks you might need.

Kid-proof your planning. Check what your kids put in their bags if they packed them so the Scout knife or water gun doesn’t cause a scare at the security gate. Make sure you bring extra batteries for the games and CD players.

Get physical. Instead of sitting at the gate the whole time, get up and walk around. Keep the blood flowing, and you’ll feel more relaxed and less confined.

Learn and practice relaxation techniques. If you can’t cope with anxiety, ask your doctor about prescribing a medication instead of using alcohol to relieve your fears. Try the drug at home first to prepare for reactions such as grogginess or impaired coordination. Same with drugs for airsickness.