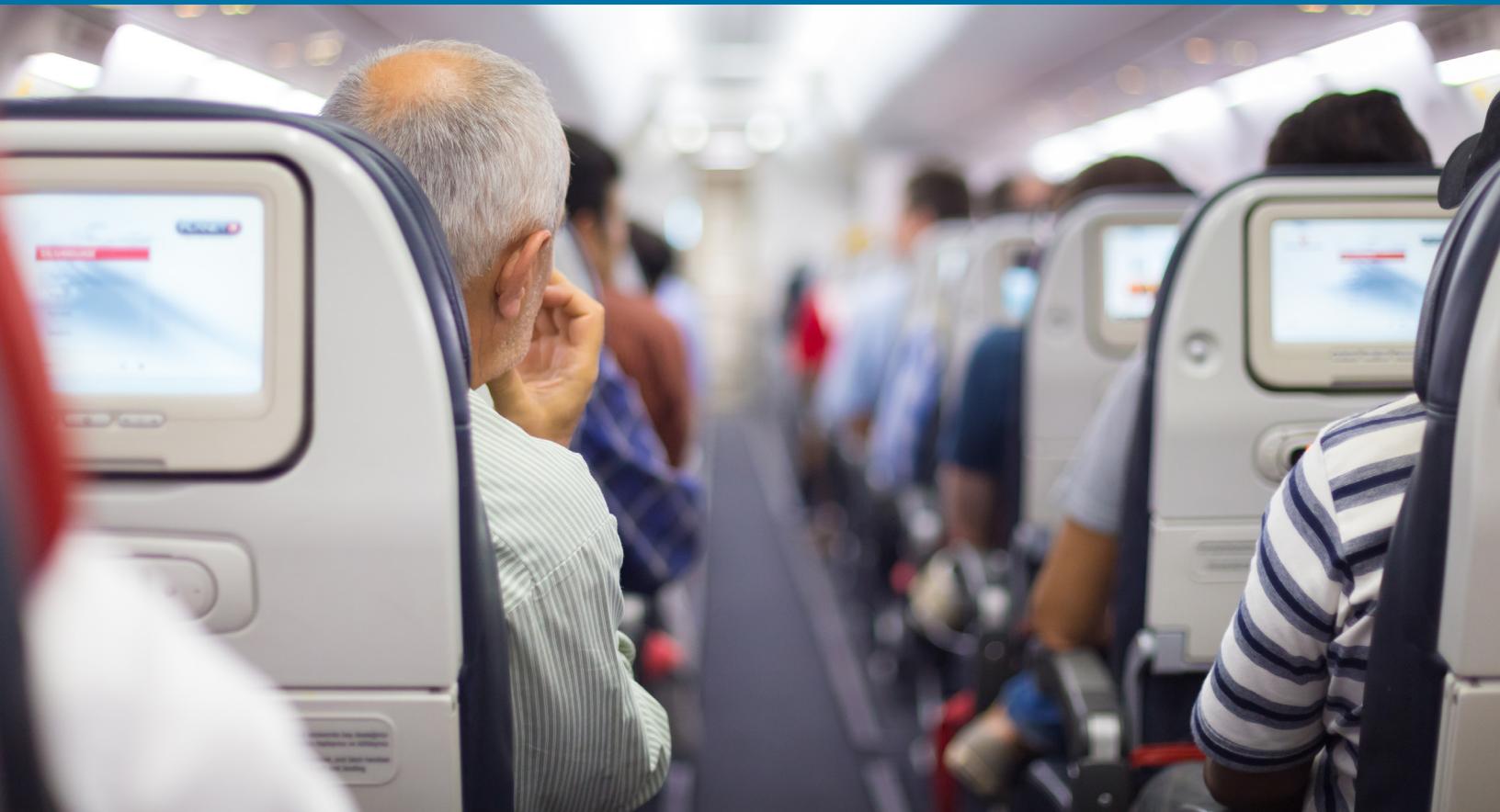


Fitness in Flight



Sitting in a narrow, crowded airplane seat for hours causes cramped and achy muscles, swollen feet, and fatigue. And anyone who has a problem with circulation in his or her legs runs a risk of thrombophlebitis when sitting for long periods of time. Fortunately, there are ways to prevent the typical aches and pains travelers frequently experience during long flights. One is to charter your own plane and stretch out in comfort. If you're like most people, however, a private plane is probably beyond your means. Instead, you can try to reduce stiffness with the following exercises.

- Tense your feet for 5 seconds, then relax them. Repeat with each muscle group, including your calves, thighs, buttocks, shoulders, neck, forearms, and hands.
- Drop your head forward. Then slowly move it to your right, and continue rotating your head, to the back, to the left, and to the front again. Repeat four times. Then reverse direction, and repeat five times.
- Raise both shoulders, then move them back, down, and forward in a circular motion.
- Reaching toward the ceiling, stretch your right arm. Then repeat with your left arm.

To promote circulation in your legs:

- Flex and extend your feet, pointing your toes up and down.
- Try to get up and walk at least once every 2 hours, if possible. You should also make an effort to breathe slowly and deeply. Aircraft air is lower in oxygen than outdoor air, and deep breathing helps you to get enough oxygen into your blood and avoid fatigue or sluggishness.