Five Tips for Traveling With Fibromyalgia

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Traveling With Fibromyalgia Flare-Free!

Travel can be exciting, fun, and a welcome relief from your everyday surroundings. Or it may be a necessity, due to work or family obligations. But when you have fibromyalgia, travel is also daunting.

Traveling is cited as one of the most common triggers for a fibromyalgia flare-up, but that does not have to be the case. There are some things that you can do to help prevent that from happening.

It is good to pinpoint what is it that makes traveling such a common trigger. A lot of things can contribute to this. Some of the most likely possibilities are:

- Discomfort during travel from sitting for long hours in a car or plane.
- Having to walk more than normal.
- Not getting as much sleep as you normally do.
- Not being able to sleep comfortably in an unfamiliar place.

And this does not even to begin to cover the stress that can go along with traveling with fibromyalgia. So what can you do to have a fun, relaxing time during your travels? Here are a few tips that may help when traveling with fibromyalgia.

1. Plan Ahead

To have a successful trip planning is vital. Leaving things to the last minute leads to forgetting important items that you need. It can also lead to unnecessary stress as you rush around trying to get things together. And stress, as we know, leads to fibro flares.

To avoid that, make all necessary travel accommodations well in advance. Make sure you have all the needed paperwork and documents where you will be able to get to them easily. Trust me, having to leave a cruise boarding line to rush back to luggage check-in because you left your birth certificate in your suitcase is not fun. I can also assure you that arriving at the airport only to realize that your husband drove you to the wrong one is not fun either.

I would highly recommend checking and double checking that you have everything you need, that you know where to go, and when to be there. This will help things go smoothly and lower stress levels.

Early on, decide what you need to take and if there is anything you need to purchase. I find it is best to make a detailed list to easily keep track of what is left to buy or pack. Start packing a few days in advance, so that you can do a little at a time and not become worn out.

At least a week ahead, make sure you have enough of your medications to last you through the end of your trip. It

may also be a good idea to check with your doctor to make sure you are healthy enough for travel or if they have any recommendations for you.

2. Check Airline Accommodations

If you are using a wheelchair, whether you are normally in one or feel that it may be necessary for the trip, check with the airline, car rental company, and hotel for special accommodations.

Even if you aren't using a wheelchair there still may be special arrangements that can be made to make you more comfortable during the journey. Many airlines will offer to have someone help you with boarding and getting to any connecting flights.

But once again, travel planning is important, as some airlines may require advance notice if assistance is needed.

Next page: Three more tips for traveling with fibromyalgia flare-free!

3. Pack All Necessities

So this may seem obvious, but it's the obvious things that usually fall through the cracks. Make sure you have all of your medications, vitamins, and supplements. Bring extra pain medicine in case it is needed. Remember to have all of these where you can get to them quickly and easily.

Pack your heating pad/bottle. Pack any creams, ointments, or lotions you normally use to help with pain or to relax. If there is a special pillow or blanket that makes you comfortable, bring it. Bring music that relaxes you or makes you happy. If you like to read bring a good book that you can enjoy during your travels.

The goal is to enjoy yourself as much as possible, so if there is anything that will make that happen, bring it! It's also good to pack a few healthy snacks and bottled water, you never know when they may be needed.

4. Stick to Your Normal Schedule as Much as Possible

This is a can be difficult to do, but if you stick somewhat close to your normal schedule of sleep and medication this will help you to enjoy your travel experience more. Eat when you need to and drink plenty of water. If you normally drink herbal tea, then make sure you continue to do that throughout your travels.

One of the fun things about traveling is eating things you might not normally, but use caution. Eating too much of trigger foods can lead to a flare, as can alcoholic beverages, so make sure to take a balanced approach to what you eat and drink.

5. Be Flexible

Does this contradict number 4? No. When I say be flexible I am referring to your expectations as to what all you will do during your trip. Don't try to plan activities for all day every day. Pick a few things you would like to do and then do them as you can. Make time to rest at regular intervals, even if you feel you don't need to at the time. Doing this can help to prevent a flare from occurring.

If you are traveling with other people, it is best to make sure they know what to expect from you well in advance. I can speak with personal experience – when the person you are with wants to go, go, go and you can't, and they are obviously disappointed, it can be frustrating for everyone involved.

It would be wise to sit down and discuss what you need and want to do, and make sure they are okay with taking things slowly or occasionally doing things without you. It may even be a good idea to make a list of what you want to do together and then be sure to plan these things early in the trip or for a time you will be more likely to feel

well. This will benefit you as well as them and will go a long way toward everyone having a good time.

Traveling is supposed to be relaxing. It is a good time to try new things, learn about different areas and people. It can be an opportunity to get away from a monotonous routine. For those of us with a chronic illness it may not be as easy, and it may require more forethought than the average person, but having fibromyalgia does not automatically rule us out from getting away for a while.

Being ill should not stop us from enjoying life!