The British Chiropractic Association has some helpful holiday advice for this summer.

The last thing you want is back pain to ruin that dream getaway. According to the latest research from the British Chiropractic Association, **one in three people suffer from back pain** and it is often when people are on holiday, out of their normal routine, that things go wrong. So be aware of the potential pitfalls before and during your holiday with tips from the BCA.

Before you go….

- **Suitcase selection** – Choose wisely, buy the lightest case possible that has wheels, hard cases can sometimes weigh a lot before you even start to fill them.
- **Two cases are better than one** - If possible take two light suitcases rather than one, so you can distribute the weight more easily.
- **Push, don't pull! -** Many wheeled cases encourage you to pull the case handle from behind, but this makes the upper body/back twist. Instead, push the case in front of you.
- **Get a good night's sleep** – Travelling when tired increases your chances of injury, so make sure you sleep well the night before a long journey and avoid rushing around.

Driving you round the bend…

- **Make adjustments** – Over 32,000 people[1] visit a BCA chiropractor each month with injuries that are aggravated, or caused by, poor driving posture. So if you're driving to your holiday destination, ensure the seat position is slightly backwards so that it feels natural and that your elbows are at a comfortable and relaxed angle.
- **Relax -** Relaxing at the wheel as this reduces stress on the spine and allows your seat to take your weight.
- **Take regular breaks** – The BCA advises that you should stop and stretch your legs (and arms!) at least every two hours.
- **Clench your cheeks** - If you are stuck in traffic exercise in your seat. Try buttock clenches, side bends and shoulder shrugs and circles.
- **Leave the tight clothes at home** – They will restrict your movement.

Up, Up and Away….

- **Flying high** - If you're flying, avoid alcohol during the flight as this will cause you to dehydrate. This can exaggerate muscle pain, so drink plenty of soft drinks instead.
- **Air-exercise** – You will be restricted to your seat for most of the flight but avoid stiffness by doing shoulder shrugs, buttock clenches and foot circles.

Arrivals…

- **Avoid 'travelators'** – Get your joints moving quickly after a flight and walk rather than the easy option of a moving walkway.
- **Round and round** – Ensure your bag is easily identifiable (e.g. knot a ribbon around the handle) to avoid lifting other people's heavy cases in error.

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[1] Research conducted amongst BCA chiropractors

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- **Steer clear of trolleys** – Unless your case does not have wheels of its own, try not to use airport trolleys. Wonky wheels are common and you could hurt your back trying to correct a wayward trolley.

At Your Destination…

- **Bed down at the hotel** - When you get to your hotel, if your bed is too hard, ask the hotel staff for a spare duvet or continental quilt or blanket to put between you and the mattress. Firm beds are not always best, but it is easier to soften a hard bed than make a soft bed harder.
- **Lounging around** - If you're heading to the sun loungers in search of that perfect tan, try not to lie on your tummy with your back and neck arched back when reading your book or magazine. Put the reading matter on the floor, so that you can view it over the edge of the sun bed; this should allow you to keep your head and neck in a more neutral position.
- **Exercise in safety** – If keeping in shape is on your holiday agenda, ensure you have a full induction to the hotel gym equipment.

Eating and sleeping under the stars…

- **Eating alfresco** – This is a favourite summer-time pleasure, especially when camping, but be aware of your 'Picnic Posture'. It is often more comfortable sitting on a slight bank with your knees below your pelvis, rather than on flat ground.
- **Keep It Light -** Use an appropriate picnic basket with lightweight plates and utensils. There even picnic backpacks that have all you need in one convenient bag which is also easier to carry.

Keep these tips in mind and you'll be well on your way to a pain-free and enjoyable holiday! If you are experiencing any discomfort, contact your local BCA chiropractor.

Chiropractors treat problems with your joints, bones and muscles, and the effects they have on your nervous system. Working on all the joints of your body, concentrating particularly on the spine, they use their hands to make gentle, specific adjustments (the chiropractic word for manipulation) to improve the efficiency of your nervous system and release your body's natural healing ability. Chiropractic does not involve the use of any drugs or surgery.
The information here is guidance and you should consult a BCA chiropractor or other healthcare professional for further specific advice if you are experiencing pain, have an existing injury or other medical condition.

For more information or to find a BCA chiropractor in your area:

The British Chiropractic Association
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Website: ***www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk***

Like medical practitioners and dentists, all chiropractors are registered by law. Members of the British Chiropractic Association (BCA) are registered with the UK regulator, the General Chiropractic Council and the association only accepts members who have graduated from an internationally recognised college of chiropractic education after a minimum of four years full-time training. The BCA promotes high standards of conduct, practice, education and training.

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