

# 5 tricks to make you feel less afraid while flying

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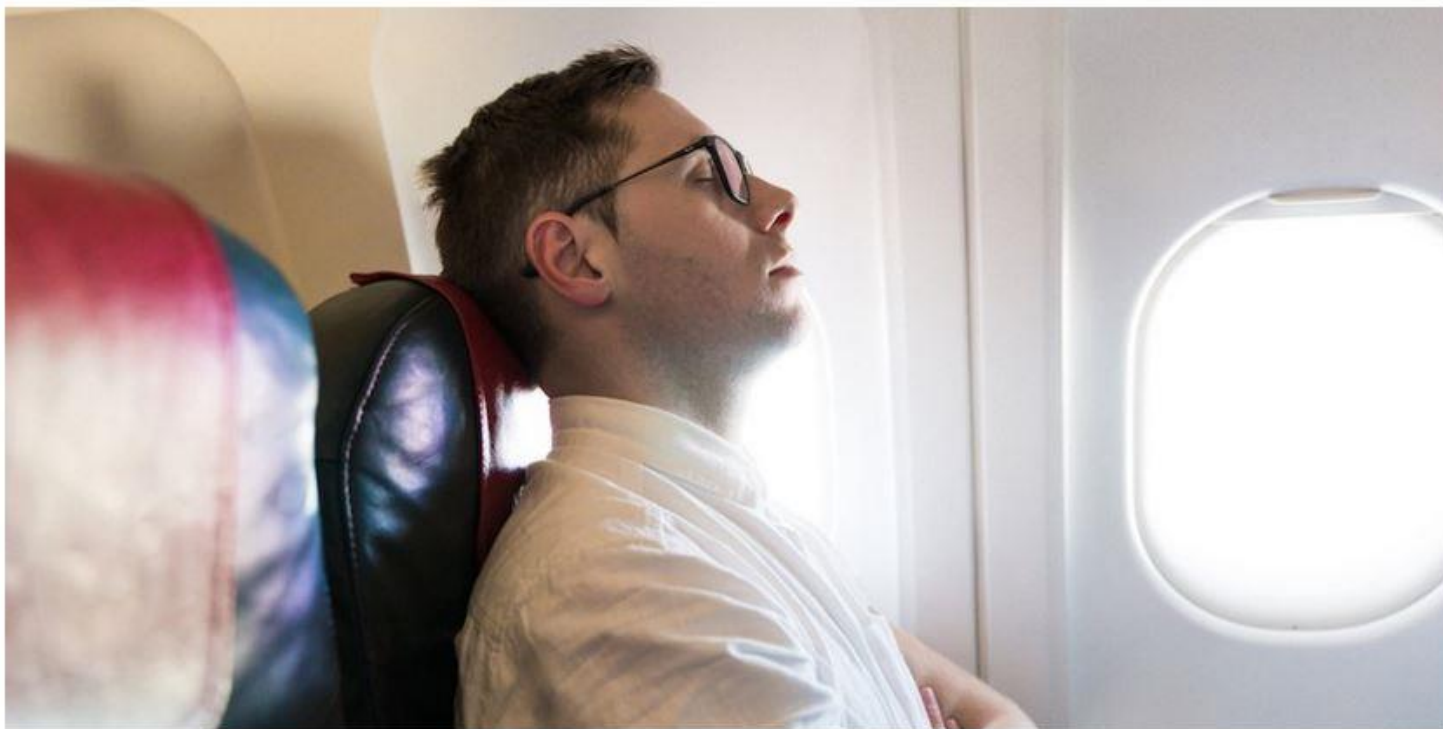
If airplane travel makes you sweat, there are ways to ease your anxiety. TravnikovStudio/Shutterstock

- **Airplane** travel allows us to get anywhere within hours, depending on your destination.
- For many, air travel is a comfortable and enjoyable experience. For others, it's a trigger for anxiety and stress, with some even opting travel by other means.
- If you're scared of flying yet looking to conquer your fear, here are 5 ways to make yourself less scared of airplane travel.

A lot of us get nervous when it's time to fly. In fact, some people are so scared they avoid airplanes altogether, despite the fact that air travel is much safer than riding in a car, according to the National Safety Council, a nonprofit public service organization.

Even if takeoff and landing make you sweat, there are ways to get over your fear of flying.

## 1. Catch some zzz's



**Take a nap on the airplane.** Solomiya Malovana/Shutterstock

Although I wouldn't say that I'm afraid of flying, and I do it frequently, there's something about being thousands of feet in the air that sometimes makes me uneasy.

A cramped airplane seat is not the ideal place to take a nap, but I've found it helps the flight go by faster and distracts me from my nerves.

## 2. Educate yourself about airplanes



**Know the sounds and signals of an airplane.** Jack Taylor/Getty Images

Even if you're not interested in becoming a pilot, learning more about airplanes could help ease your nerves, according to clinical psychologist Martin Seif.

Trying reading up on "how a plane flies, facts about turbulence, and the meaning of the various sounds and bumps during a normal flight," Seif wrote on the Anxiety and Depression Association of America's website.

A deep dive into the intricacies of a plane's mechanics isn't necessary, but reading about the noises you'll likely come across on a plane, and more importantly, listening to them — which you can do in this Smithsonian article— could help prepare you.

Seif also suggests trying out virtual reality. For example, this New York City-based program combines VR therapy and biofeedback to expose you to the experience of flying before you conquer the real deal.

### 3. Take advantage of therapy services at airports

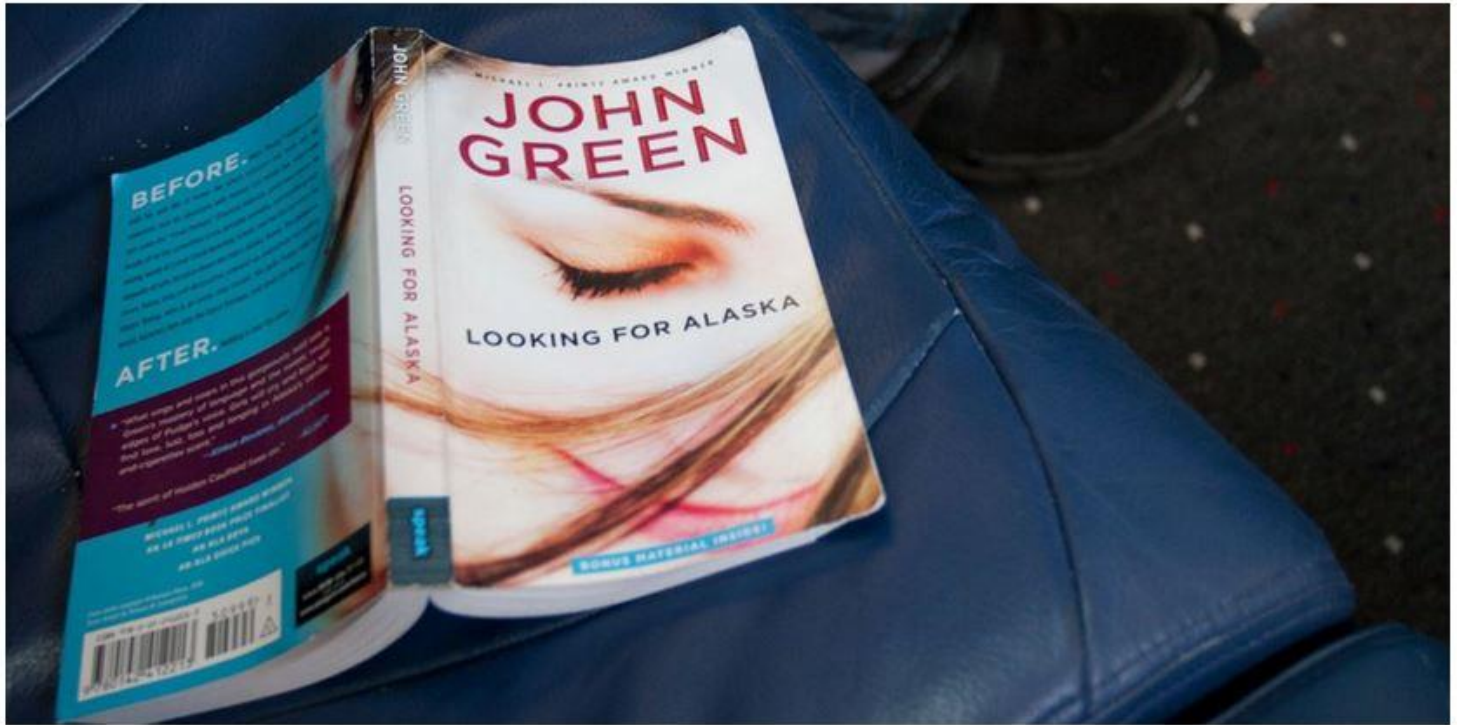


**Some airports have therapy options like playing with dogs.** Julio Cortez/Associated Press

Many major airports offer various types of therapy options — and some of those sessions include man's best friend. The "United Paws" program brings therapy dogs to airports, and travelers are allowed to pet and spend time with them before their flights. Here's a video of the pups interacting with passengers at Newark Liberty International Airport during the holiday season.

If you're allergic to dogs or simply would prefer another type of furry friend, Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport brings in miniature therapy horses twice a month, and San Francisco International Airport is home to a therapy pig.

## 4. Distract yourself



**Distract yourself by reading on the airplane.** [Emily Poisel/Flickr/Attribution License](#)

Boarding a plane is half the battle, but once you're up in the air, there's usually no turning back. If taking a nap isn't an option for you, distracting yourself could be. Save a book you're really looking forward to reading for your next flight or stock up on episodes of an interesting podcast (especially if the host has a soothing voice).

## 5. Avoid alcohol



**Alcohol and coffee can make your airplane anxiety worse.** [slyellow/Shutterstock](#)

I hate to crash the party, which is why I saved this tip for last, but you should probably ditch the booze if you're afraid of flying. Just being in a plane, especially for a long time, can lead to dehydration— and alcohol can add to the problem.

Though drinking can temporarily take the edge off your nerves, research has shown that it can also increase anxiety in the hours after drinking alcohol, according to the American Addiction Centers. If your buzz wears off mid flight, you may feel even worse than you did before.