



Your travel4seniors.com editor is now elderly, and gone are the days of running through airports to get aboard my flights. Although I can still walk in most situations, airport inside distances are often just too much for me to handle.

These days, I book a wheelchair to make all my flight schedules. If you need one for your next flight, I offer suggestions on how to make the journey less troublesome and more enjoyable:

**Book in Advance:** I always try to schedule flights well in advance, because there's a wider selection of seats available. I also book a wheelchair to be at the airport entrance when I arrive. Physically-challenged senior travelers are usually permitted to pre-board, another reason early arrivals are essential. An employee then rolls me through security. Even when the area is crowded, my wheelchair usually gets priority boarding the departing flight gate. Then, I make sure a wheelchair is at the aircraft exit as the flight lands. The services are free and can be booked online or by phone. Of course, tips are always welcomed by helpful airport employees.

**Travel Light And Follow Security Rules:** I fly with a carry-on bag, and sometimes also a small backpack, all easy to take on the wheelchair and fit in my aircraft seat area. I check in advance with the TSA website for disabled travelers for updates and info, and don't bring any banned items. I prepare myself to stand and/or walk a few steps through screening, and request help

when necessary. .

**Invest In More Comfort:** Today's low-priced coach seats are getting more and more restrictive. If you fly infrequently, it may be a more enjoyable trip if you're willing to spend extra money to upgrade to a roomier, more comfortable seat. Most airlines now offer an upgraded coach section with more room, sometimes called premium economy. Others have fixed price upgrades for roomier seats within the coach cabin. I find the additional charges for these seats on longer domestic and overseas flights worth the price.

**Be Safe In Flight:** As I board, I first ask the flight attendant for help to my seat, stowing away of my carry-on and later, when I need bathroom breaks. I try to be considerate of other passengers and usually they're willing to help make me comfortable.

Of course, flying for wheelchair-bound travelers can be very stressful. However, careful preparation and knowledge of what to expect at terminals and in the air can greatly ease the ordeal. By planning ahead and leaving ample time to deal with unexpected issues, I can travel with minimum inconvenience.