

## Press Release

### For Immediate Release

Contact: Lisa Hauptner / Captain Tom Bunn  
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### INTRODUCTION TO CAPTAIN TOM'S TOP TEN TIPS

Captain Tom's Top Ten Tips are the basics offered by ordinary fear of flying programs, so we offer this help free. These tips are adequate for people whose fear of flying is mild.

A person who has panic attacks, or who becomes anxious during takeoff or during turbulence, can obtain relief only through the SOAR program by training the mind to not react to flying.

This applies also to people who have claustrophobia or who become anxious in elevators, or in tunnels, or on bridges and other high places.

### CAPTAIN TOM'S TOP TEN TIPS

#### Tip Number One - The 5-4-3-2-1 Exercise:

Start by doing the 5-4-3-2-1 every five minutes. Then every fifteen minutes. Then every hour. It is nothing more than a focusing exercise, something to intensely occupy your mind so disturbing thoughts can't take hold.

Sit or recline comfortably. Focus on some object in front of you. Keep your focus on that throughout the exercise. (If your eyes drift off, just bring them back.) Do it out loud first. Then, try it silently. See if one works better for you than the other.

## Conquer Fear of Flying

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- Say "I see" and name something in your peripheral vision.
- Say "I see" and name something else in your peripheral vision.
- Continue until you have made five statements.

For example: I see the lamp, I see the table, I see a spot on the lamp shade, I see a book on the table, I see a picture on the table.

- Say "I hear" and name something you hear.
- Say "I hear" and name something else you hear.
- Continue until you have made five statements.

NOTE: you will have to repeat something if there are not five different things you can hear.

- Say "I feel" and name something you hear. (not internal, like heart pounding or tension, but external).
- Say "I hear" and name something else you hear.
- Continue until you have made five statements.

For example: I feel the chair under me, I feel my arm against my leg, etc.

That completes one cycle. It takes intense concentration. That is exactly what you want. As you concentrate on non-threatening things, the "fight or flight" hormones that were in your body when you started the exercise get burned off. As they get used up, you get more relaxed. See, you don't have to MAKE yourself relax; as the old ones get used up, you just get more relaxed.

What about the next cycle? If you always made five statements, you soon could do the exercise WITHOUT intense concentration, and your mind could drift back to "bad" thoughts. We keep concentration intense by making one change each cycle. Instead of doing five statements again, do four statements. Then, in the next cycle, do three statements. Then, in the next cycle, do two statements. Then, in the next cycle, do one statement. Then, in the next cycle, go back to five, etc.

Stop when you are as relaxed as you want to be. If you want to be more relaxed - or to fall asleep - continue. If you lose count, that is a good sign because it means you are getting so relaxed that you are losing count.

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### **Tip Number Two - Avoid Imagination And Manage Your Stress Level:**

During the flight, focus on what is really happening - NOT what you imagine. Why? What is real is not going to cause anxiety.

When you think something may be happening, ask yourself if you have any real proof of that.

Feelings are hard to ignore when they get big. Manage them by tracking your anxiety level on a scale or zero to ten.

Take along something to write on. Write down your feelings and thoughts. Dumping thoughts and feelings out onto paper helps prevent build-up.

### **Tip Number Three - First Time Anxiety:**

"First time anxiety" is to be expected. Anything for the first time leads to anxiety. We pilots would not be doing this job unless it was safe. And, insurance companies are no fools; they sell pilots insurance at the same rates as non-pilots.

### **Tip Number Four - Avoid Imagination:**

Keep the "visual channel" of your mind fully occupied with something concrete to keep imagination from gaining a foothold.

Buy several magazines with splashy color pictures. Just flip through the pictures to keep the "visual" part of your mind busy. This is a great time to focus on needlepoint or puzzles, if you like those activities.

Or bring a DVD player, or a video game. Still bring magazines; you are not allowed to use the DVD player or video game during takeoff or landing.

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### **Tip Number Five - Music Filters Out Plane Noises:**

Keep the "auditory channel" of your mind occupied. Bring along an audio player with plenty of music.

Or, if you have an iPod or other MP3 audio or MP4 video player, get "Take Me Along", the special tracks I have recorded to play during your trip. You play one when you arrive at the airport, another when you are waiting to board. Then, after boarding, I tell you everything to expect on takeoff (the noises the plane makes are included). Then during cruise, I tell you why turbulence is not a problem. And before landing, you hear about everything to expect during landing. It's like having your own pilot with you.

### **Tip Number Six - Make It Your Choice:**

Take back control. Be very aware that - even if pressured to fly - you still have a CHOICE whether you fly or not.

Make that choice - versus whatever the alternatives are - a conscious and deliberate choice.

Take still more control. Before you board, go to the window. MEMORIZE VISUALLY what is outside the jet-way and outside the airplane. Use your photographic memory to record in detail what you see. Then, when walking through the jet-way, visualizing what is outside helps reassure you that there IS an outside and the walls are not able to pressure you.

### **Tip Number Seven - Meet The Captain:**

This is so important it is equal to all the other tips combined. If you don't do this one, you only have yourself to blame for an awful flight, because it works.

Tell the gate agent you need to board early because you are an anxious flier and need to speak to the captain. Some gate agents will help you do this and some won't. If the agent will, stay nearby so the agent doesn't forget you. If the gate agent will not board you early, ask the agent to point out to you where you will be getting on the plane. Then position yourself right by the entrance. When boarding (for first class passengers, elderly passengers, passengers with kids, or people who need extra time - that's you) is announced, immediately step forward and board.

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Don't go to your seat. Instead, find a flight attendant who is not tied up directing people to their seats.

Tell the flight attendant that you are an anxious flier and are working on it with someone who says it is very important that you meet the captain.

Explain that you understand about security, so you want him/her to ask the captain for you, while you wait right there.

**DO NOT APPROACH THE COCKPIT ON YOUR OWN. WAIT FOR A FLIGHT ATTENDANT.**

**EVEN IF THE CAPTAIN OR FLIGHT ATTENDANT SIGNAL YOU TO COME IN, A SKY MARSHALL SEATED TO THE SIDE MIGHT NOT SEE THAT. WAIT TO BE ACCOMPANIED.**

Meeting the captain keeps you from feeling alone. It also puts you in personal contact with control.

You will sense their competence and confident. It helps to know they - also - want to get back home to their family, and they have been doing so for years. They will make extra announcements for you.

Embarrassing? Blame it on me; tell them I made you promise to do it.

### **Tip Number Eight - Your Space:**

Take some more control. Stretch out your arms and and legs, to sense the physical space that is yours.

What about visual space? An aisle seat can give you more VISUAL space. Many find visual space more important than physical space.

If you find yourself having breathing difficulty, hold your breath for one- thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three at the end of each exhalation and at the end of each inhalation.

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### **Tip Number Nine - Know About Noise Abatement:**

On some takeoffs, we reduce power after reaching about one thousand feet (roughly twenty-five seconds after liftoff), which can be frightening if you don't know what it's all about. Ask the captain when you meet him or her if the power will be changed significantly after take off, and ask how it will feel.

### **Tip Number Ten - Lightheadedness Doesn't Mean Falling:**

Expect and understand the physical sensations that are a natural and routine part of flight. Imagine this: you get in an elevator on the ground floor, and press the button for the tenth floor. The door closes, and as the elevator starts to rise, you feel heavy. As the elevator approaches the tenth floor, it has to slow down and stop. As it does, you feel "light-headed." In an elevator you know what the feeling is about. You are just slowing down your ascent. Though this feels like falling, you aren't falling at all.

The same thing happens in an airplane when we level off after a climb, or when we reduce power after takeoff.

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Also, take along my phone numbers:

In the US and Canada, toll free (877) 332-7359. Outside, (203) 258-4803. UK Free phone: 0800 048 8750

Yours truly,

Tom

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P.S.

We host a very active message board on fear of flying.

Every Wednesday night at 9:00 PM Eastern time, SOAR hosts a LIVE chat on fear of flying

Order any part of the SOAR Course or the Full Guaranteed SOAR Program

For immediate counseling, visit: [www.flyhelp.com](http://www.flyhelp.com)

**If you would like more information, or to schedule an interview, please contact us 800-332-7359 or email [info@fearofflying.com](mailto:info@fearofflying.com)**

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