

Release: [Don't Let a Fear of Flying Ruin Your Holiday](#), Say Counsellors

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With a record number of 2.2 million passengers travelling through Dublin Airport in May*, Ireland's largest representative body for counsellors and psychotherapists has advised that even the most nervous flyer can overcome their fears.

With the holiday season getting well under way this month, the Irish Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy (IACP) said that flying need not be a terrifying experience for nervous passengers.

The IACP said that it was important for people who were scared of flying to establish when this fear started.

"If you can find out when your fear started and identify or recognise what caused it in the first place, it can be much easier to deal with," says Shane Kelly, spokesman with the IACP.

He said that it was also vital for nervous flyers to inform themselves about flying. Finding out what happens during a flight was important because this would help to explain the myriad of noises that occur when a plane is in operation. These sounds happened as part of a routine flight and were perfectly normal.

"The more that nervous passengers inform themselves about flying and what is involved, the more it will help to dispel their concerns. It is also important to remember that flying remains by far the safest form of transport," Mr Kelly added.

The IACP also said that an effective way to overcome this anxiety was for nervous passengers to visit an airport on a day when they are not travelling. This, the organisation explained, would be especially helpful for people who suffered from severe anxiety.

"This is a great way to get used to the airport environment as well as the sounds, smells and look at aircrafts as they take off and land, but without the associated pressure of having to actually fly," Mr Kelly said.

Before the day of the flight, the IACP recommends that nervous flyers get a good night's sleep as it will help them relax and said it was important to eat well. However, they advised against consuming alcohol before or during a flight as it would do little to allay their concerns.

"On the day of the flight, get to the airport early to give yourself plenty of time and ensure that you don't have to rush around and avoid getting stressed out," Mr Kelly advised.

He also said that it was important that nervous flyers inform the cabin crew about their anxieties, as they would help anxious passengers to feel more comfortable.

"It's important to bear in mind that cabin staff encounter this issue every day in their workplace and are ideally placed to deal with it. They are used to helping people who have a fear of flying and will do their utmost to reassure any nervous passenger," Mr Kelly said.

The IACP also said that nervous passengers should wear comfortable clothing, drink plenty of water and take deep, slow breaths during the flight. The organisation also said that it was a good idea for fearful flyers to move around the plane when the seatbelt sign was off as this would help to make them feel more comfortable in their environment and would serve to distract them from their fear.

Mr Kelly added that in some extreme cases, nervous flyers could also consider taking a course with a therapist to overcome their fears.

"Remember, you are not the only one with a fear of flying," he added.

* Figures obtained from the Dublin Airport website

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About the IACP:

Established in 1981, the IACP identifies, develops and maintains professional standards of excellence in counselling and psychotherapy through education, training and accreditation. In promoting best practice and the professional development of its members, IACP holds at its core the protection of the public. Representing both the interests of clients and practitioners (over 3,500 nationwide), IACP provides a telephone referral helpline, an information service; and an online counsellor / psychotherapist / supervisor directory. IACP is a registered Charity (CHY 6615).

More information is available from the IACP's website www.iacp.ie.