

What Is Fear of Flying?

Fear of flying is a complex psychological issue, one that has been made more complex by the security concerns of the last few years. There are many books, videos, and other resources that deal with the fear of flying, so deciding what may work for you may be a difficult process. The resources on this page and on this web site will give you an idea of what fear of flying is, what you can do to deal with it, and how passengers can conquer the fear of flying.

Without getting too technical, fear of flying, is an anxiety disorder. Such fears can come about during a flight, or even well before a person gets to the airport. Often, the fear has more to do with elements of the flying experience that has little or nothing to do with the risks associated with the flight. Depending on the person, the fear of flying includes one or more of the following fears or concerns:

- * Heights
- * Being over water or having the aircraft land in water
- * Darkness (flying at night)
- * The unknown
- * Airline accidents, hijackings, bombings, and other attacks
- * Enclosed or crowded space
- * Being idle for long periods of time
- * Loss of personal freedom
- * The security screening process
- * Turbulence and other weather conditions
- * The unfamiliar sights, sounds, and sensations of a normal flight
- * Loss of control, or being dependent on technology or people
- * Issues from past psychological or physical trauma

Signs you may be afraid of flying include becoming anxious in elevators, having panic attacks before getting on a plane, or going out of your way to avoid air travel.

How many people are afraid of flying?

The airline industry is clearly aware of the fear of flying and how it affects the traveling public. Research is somewhat sparse, with one of the most important studies on fear of flying dates back to 1980, when two Boeing researchers found that 18.1% adults in the U.S. was afraid to fly, and that another 12.6% of adults experienced anxiety when they fly. In short, about one in three adult Americans were afraid to fly. The study was also interesting in that it provided details about why they avoided flying. About half reported that fear was the reason, but only about six percent considered flying unsafe. A more recent poll conducted by Newsweek Magazine in 1999 found that 50% of the adults surveyed who flew on commercial airlines were frightened at least sometimes.

How does fear of flying affect people?

Every person responds to fear of flying differently. A common reaction is to avoid flying as much as possible. There are a number of celebrities, including John Madden of video game and NFL football fame, who go out of their way to arrange their personal and professional lives to avoid flying. Other reactions include the kind of physical reactions associated with a white-knuckle flyer, such as sweating, rapid heartbeat and breathing, and nausea. Some reactions, like seeking answers to common questions about airline safety, can have a positive effect on passengers. Other reactions can be more dangerous for the passenger and other on the aircraft, such as using drugs or alcohol deal with the experience, or being abusive to other passengers, the cabin crew, or to airline representatives.

Best fear of flying quote

On 16 February 1999, director Barry Sonnenfeld, whose films include Men in Black, Men in Black II, and Wild, Wild West, escaped injury when the Gulfstream II executive jet he was riding ran off the runway at the Van Nuys, CA airport, crashed into several nearby aircraft, and caught fire. Sonnenfeld and the three crew members escaped injury, but the aircraft was seriously damaged. After the accident, Sonnenfeld was quoted as saying that "The weird thing is that I hate to fly, and the quote that I give people is that every time I get off a plane, I view it as a failed suicide attempt."

Statistics and the fear of flying

Often, the aviation safety experts point to the statistics associated with flying risk to show how flying is safe and that passengers should not be afraid. For most who have anxieties associated with flying, these statistics are meaningless because in most cases, the fear is not associated with flight risks. In other words, risk and safety are two different things, and you can't use risk statistics to convince someone that flying is safe. Even if the chance of something bad happening is a million to one, most people are worried about whether their flight is going to be the one that doesn't end well.

How to conquer fear of flying

If fear of flying is affecting you in a way that you don't like, there is no reason to accept it as normal. If you want to take positive steps to deal with it, there are plenty of options available. One of the first steps to take is to recognize that you may have a problem. The Fear of Flying Warning Signs section in this ebook has a very basic checklist to indicate if you may have significant anxieties associated with flying. You can also visit AirSafe.com and review the story behind the [SOAR fear of flying program](#), one of the few programs designed to help people deal with fear of flying that is actually designed and led by an airline pilot, Capt. Tom Bunn, who is also a trained therapist. You can also [review SOAR's products and services](#) on its web site.

Recommended fear of flying resources

Licensed therapist and airline pilot Captain Tom Bunn offers a variety of fear of flying courses that can help you deal with the stress and anxiety that comes with a fear of flying. The next section goes into more detail about SOAR.

What is SOAR?

SOAR is an organization that has been helping people overcome fear of flying since 1982.

Created by Captain Tom Bunn, a former airline pilot with over 30 years of experience, and a

currently a licensed therapist with over 20 years of

experience, SOAR grew out of program that was created by Pan Am airlines. Captain Bunn worked with the creators of that program before founding SOAR.



SOAR has continually evolved since then, led by both Captain Bunn and Lisa Hauptner, another licensed professional who has worked with Captain Bunn for almost 20 years to create an organization that provides not just one time instruction, but ongoing support to its clients, multimedia resources to deal with anxieties, weekly group counseling sessions, ongoing support, newsletters, blogs, and other resources.

SOAR's success is based on a two-step process. First, the program teaches you how flying works, why it is safe, and the psychology of aeroanxiety. Then one-to-one counseling establishes **automatic** control of feelings for when you are flying. At SOAR, they want to let you know that you are not alone in this fear. Here are a few points that SOAR feels are important and which are addressed in their program. You may connect directly to what thousands of people already deal with. Take a look:

- Many fearful fliers don't understand why flying is a problem for them. Trying to regain control is difficult. The first set of the course, *Psychology of Flight Anxiety*, explains why and teaches you how to gain control.
- You may have heard that you are safer on a modern airliner than doing your ordinary daily routine. It's true – and the second set, *How Flying Works*, gives you the information to help you understand why.
- Okay, so information is good, but you need more to deal with this fear. The third set, *Control of Anxiety* is just that. It teaches you how to control the anxiety and panic automatically.
- When you feel as though you are “the only person that has such a debilitating fear” or “the worst case”, it's easy to keep things to yourself and suffer through yet another uncomfortable flight. The fourth set, *At the Airport*, shows a group of volunteers, fearful fliers like you, and their candid interview with an airline Maintenance Supervisor, their cockpit visit on a 747, instruction on takeoff on the 747, and their comments while in the cabin during the flight.

**Find out on the next page
how Captain Bunn and
Lisa Hauptner can help!**





SOAR Relief Options

You can get this information in several convenient formats: on DVD, on MP4 (play on your iPod, iPad, or other MP4 player), or view online using your computer. Check out the following choices to see what SOAR has to offer:

Rapid Relief

Are you flying soon, like tomorrow or the next day? Rapid Relief allows you to :

- Watch immediately on your computer
- Get effective help in 90 to 190 minutes
- View 18 key videos from the SOAR Video Course
- Get free 20 minute session with Captain Bunn

[Rapid Relief is priced from \\$199.95](#)

Complete Relief

Are you flying in three to ten days? Then you may want to go with a more comprehensive Complete Relief option where you can:

- Watch immediately on your computer an
- Get effective help in 90 to 190 minutes
- View 40 key videos from the SOAR Video Course (more than twice as many)
- Get free 20 minute session with Captain Bunn
- Special bonus (see below)

Complete Relief Bonus: "Take Me Along" program for your iPod

Captain Bunn explains everything you hear and feel – as you hear and feel it - so you will know everything is OK. This bonus will:

- Help you with anxiety before the flight
- Help you stay calm during check in
- Help you relax in the boarding lounge
- Show you what pilots do during takeoff
- Explain why turbulence is not a problem
- Show you how signals from the runway bring the plane to the perfect landing spot

With the Take Me Along bonus, you will never fly alone again! Let Captain Bunn reassure you moment by moment throughout your flight. Anxious fliers say they don't know how they got along without "Take Me Along".

[Complete Relief is priced from \\$299.95](#)

AirSafe.com Fear of Flying Resources

The Complete SOAR 11-DVD Course

Would you like to have all of what SOAR has to offer? Then buy the package that has it all for \$480. With this set you get:

- Control feelings automatically
- Get the information that you need
- Stop panic before it starts
- Get free 20 minute session with Captain Bunn

[Buy the Full Video Course Today!](#)

SPECIAL BONUS - 20% OFF COMPLETE RELIEF OR FULL VIDEO COURSE

If you act now, and order before the end of February 2012, you can save 20% on either of the premier SOAR products, Complete Relief or the full video course products by simply using the coupon code **AIRSAFE2** when you either Rapid Relief or Complete Relief.

[Use the coupon code and save \\$60 on Complete Relief or \\$96 on the full 11-DVD course](#)

Fear of Flying Warning Signs and Solutions

Fear of flying is not just about flying, it could also be about some part of the flying experience that is unrelated to airplanes, but closely related to one or more situations that may make you stressful or anxious. Not all of these symptoms below look like they could be due to fears or anxieties around flying. However, the act of flying may make it difficult or impossible to avoid having to face these stressful situations. For example, if you have a fear of enclosed spaces and get dizzy when you are in an elevator, you can always get out at the next stop. In an airplane, that next stop may be hours away, and the amount of stress that builds up over that time can be tremendous. Whether you are a veteran passenger, or if you have never flown before, the following list may help you identify whether you have a fear of flying problem.

You may have a fear of flying if:

- * You don't like being in enclosed or crowded spaces.
- * You don't like being around strangers.
- * You would rather be in control of a situation, and you don't like to be dependent on technology or on other people to protect you.
- * You like your personal freedom and don't like it when people tell you what to do, or what not to do.
- * You have a fear of heights.
- * You have a fear of being over water.
- * Flying, or even the thought of flying, makes you tense, or leads to headaches, nausea, fatigue, or other physical discomfort.
- * You have a fear of the dark or a fear of being out at night.
- * You don't like invasions of privacy, especially searches of your belongings or physical searches of your body.
- * You are very concerned about the risks of death or injury from aircraft accidents or from hijackings or other deliberate attacks on an aircraft.
- * You don't like being idle for long periods of time.
- * You experience sudden or prolonged panic attacks when you fly or when you are about to get on an airplane.
- * You arrange your life to limit your flying, or you avoid flying altogether.
- * You become easily angered by others when you fly.
- * The sounds and activities associated with a normal flight bother you.
- * You are concerned about turbulence and other weather conditions.
- * You are afraid of the unknown.

When you have to face these fears and anxieties over a long period of time, for example, during a flight, or even during the weeks leading up to the flight, your reactions may include actions such as self-medicating with alcohol or drugs, or other actions that are related to the stress of flying. If you have one or more of these symptoms, it may be worth your while to do some personal research on the subject. For more information,

[Visit the SOAR online store and check these out today!](#)

About AirSafe.com

The site was created in July 1996 by Dr. Todd Curtis to provide the aviation community and the flying public with timely and useful information about airline safety and airline security, with a focus on crashes that kill airline passengers. Over the years, the site has expanded its role by adding significant information and resources related to baggage issues, airline complaints, and fear of flying. AirSafe.com has also expanded its reach by creating a variety of information resources, including the following:

The AirSafe.com News

<http://www.airsafenews.com>

This site features news and commentary about airline safety, airline security, plane crash updates, and airline policy developments. The articles also highlight problems passengers have with airline customer service representatives, airport security, baggage handling, and other travel hassles.

The Conversation at AirSafe.com podcast

<http://podcast.airsafe.org>

This audio and video podcast series features discussions of critical and timely issues related to aviation safety and aviation security. You can subscribe to the podcast using an RSS feed or through iTunes.

AirSafe.com Fear of Flying Resources

Featuring resources from the SOAR fear of flying organization, visit this part of AirSafe.com to learn the basics of fear of flying, a list of symptoms that may show you have a fear of flying, and links to resources to do something about it.

[For more information, please visit fear.airsafe.org](http://fear.airsafe.org)

The AirSafe.com YouTube channel

<http://www.youtube.com/airsafe>

Features several years worth of AirSafe.com videos, including analyses of accident investigations, and selected episodes of the video podcast.

Connect with AirSafe.com

There are a number of ways to keep in touch with AirSafe.com, including Twitter, Facebook, and a mailing list:

Twitter: twitter.com/airsafe

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Airsafecom/18541639875>

Mailing list: subscribe.airsafe.org

Email: tcurtis@airsafe.com

Phone: 202.596.2510