



*During long airport waits, sleep mask for quiet cat naps*

Headlines blare: airport computer glitch causes nationwide flight delays for hours. Add the usual winter and holiday schedule screw-ups, and passengers should prepare to spend hours sitting, fuming and griping on butt-hard seats in the airport. Is there anything you can do to make the long hours of waiting, if not pleasant, at least almost bearable? Here are some suggestions:

1. Electronics and more electronics: Bring along a laptop with DVD player and stash of discs. You can work, listen and/or watch to pass the dragging time away.
2. Privacy, sort of: Bring noise-reducing earphones and eye mask to blot out some of the noise and harsh lights of the airport waiting room.
3. Books: Bring some old-fashioned paper books or new electronic ones.
4. Games: Video games on your laptop and crossword puzzles help pass the time. Take a deck of cards for solitaire or a pick-up game with other bored waiters. Strip poker is strictly optional.
5. No coffee: It'll only make you more irritable, nervous and come up with new curse words for the airline, weather and guy next to you yakking on his cell phone. A nice hot cup of decaf tea can help you relax and maybe catch some shut-eye.
6. Snooze: In the inevitably overcrowded waiting area, it'll be difficult to find a place to stretch out and sleep. Pack an inflatable pillow, and with your coat, try to find a comfy place to snuggle. If you can get a stack of newspapers or large piece of cardboard, try to find a quiet floor corner and stretch out.
7. Call friends and family: Use wait time to take care of phone calls you've been waiting to make. If holiday time, offer greetings. If business, make appointments or other needed contacts. Make an obscene phone call to the president of the airline.