



Of course, it's a responsibility, but the journey doesn't have to be a full-time, tiresome burden. There are many creative ways to make the trip more enjoyable and less stressful for both you and your physically-challenged companion.

Plan Ahead: Before making specific schedules, consider all travel options and choose the least complicated. Contact airlines, hotels and cruise lines in advance. Ask about appropriate help, including wheelchair access and special guest facilities, such as ramps and handicapped-friendly bathrooms.

Be Realistic: Set schedules that don't require demanding physical activity. Casual sightseeing can make the journey less stressful. Take rest periods in lobbies, cafés, gardens, parks and other pleasant surroundings.

If you're planning a cruise, consider a riverboat trip. They're less crowded, carry fewer passengers and allow viewing of port stops comfortably from the decks and cabin balconies. Join group excursions ashore that are paced for physical limits, and led by experienced staffs.

Follow Doctor's Orders: Before leaving home, stock up on your companion's medical needs to last for the duration of the trip, plus several days more, in case of delays. Be sure equipment and medications are in approved packaging to meet airport security requirements.

If the senior may have incontinence problems, take an adequate supply of adult diapers and disposable cleaning materials. Always have with you the names, addresses and phone numbers of your companion's physicians.

Available Wheels: Before arriving at the airport or dockside, book a wheelchair to be there to

meet you. Save your senior from long walks required in terminals and to get through security more quickly.

Consider Your Needs: When planning a trip with an elderly person, find time for your own comfort and enjoyment. Book yourself an excursion, late dining or entertainment, and arrange for someone to look after the senior while you're away.

If there are other family members on the trip, set up a schedule where each serves equal duties to be with the elderly person, so others may enjoy more free time. If necessary, contact the cruise ship or hotel to arrange for a paid companion.

Cruises and resorts attract many seniors, and some activities are designed for them. Book your senior to join older groups at meals, lectures and excursions. This can also give you more personal free time.