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The Mottley Law Firm

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AIRPLANE EARS



THE SCIENCE BEHIND YOUR EARS POPPING ON FLIGHTS

When it comes to flying on an airplane, you can avoid cramped legs by upgrading to first class or catch a view by picking the window seat. However, there's no getting around your ears popping during takeoff and landing. Believe it or not, there is a scientific explanation behind this common annoyance.

As you read this, you're likely not on an airplane, and the air pressure on either side of your eardrums is equal. Air is currently passing right on through your eustachian tube, a narrow passage that leads from your middle ear cavity to your pharynx and allows for pressure to be equalized on each side of your eardrums. When you're in flight on an airplane, air pressure is not equal. During both ascent and descent, your eardrums stretch to try to adapt to the changes. In order to equalize the pressure, your eustachian tube needs to open and close. When it does, your ears pop!

Usually, the ear popping is irritating but nothing more. However, in rare cases, the pressure can lead to ear pain and even loss in hearing, especially if your ears don't pop.

In this case, you may need to make an effort to get your eustachian tube to open by yawning, talking, or swallowing. Sucking on a piece of candy, swallowing some water, or chewing gum may also help! One of the best

things you can do is make sure you are not sleeping as the airplane takes off or lands because your eustachian tube isn't able to open and close normally. If you commonly struggle with congestion or sore ears on flights, taking a nasal decongestant before you board may ensure that your eustachian tube is not blocked.

If your hearing and ears do not return to normal shortly after the flight, be sure to schedule an appointment to see your health care professional as soon as possible.



MY BIG OLYMPIC MOMENT

IN 1980, I SAW THE TORCH UP CLOSE!



At 7 a.m. on Oct. 20, 2021, a plane arrived at the Beijing Capital Airport in China. Inside was a bright red lamp called a *changxin*, and inside *that* was a tiny, flickering Olympic flame. Later that day, a team of torchbearers took turns running with the flame across the city of Beijing. Eventually, they reached the Olympic Tower, where that flame lit the Olympic Cauldron in preparation for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games next month.

I've been fascinated by stories about the running of the Olympic flame ever since I was a kid. That's because when I was in third grade, the flame for the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York, passed right through my neighborhood.

I lived in the then-rural Hanover County, Virginia. Life was slower and simpler back then. We didn't have cellphones or cable. All we really had was our little community and a good old-fashioned phone on the wall. Not much happened in Hanover in those days, so when we heard that the torch would run through our community on its 13-day journey by foot to New York, the entire county became fixated on the event.

I'll never forget the first announcement about the torch. Our principal, Mr. Young, shared the big news over the PA system at Rural Point Elementary School a few weeks before it happened, because the route of the torch came right down Studley Road in front of the school. He sounded so proud and excited! Later that week, the teachers decorated a large bulletin board in the cafeteria with a scene of the torch in transit down the road. I couldn't wait.

On Jan. 30, 1980, Olympic workers lit the flame in Olympia, Greece, and put it on a plane. The next day, the fire touched down at Langley Airforce Base in Hampton, Virginia, just an hour and a half from my hometown. It was almost our moment. Then, disaster struck!

Just as the torch touched down, a massive snowstorm struck our part of Virginia. This wasn't the polite dusting of snow we normally get a few times a year. The storm was fierce! It dumped so much snow in our front yard and whipped icy winds down Studley Road, the very road the Olympic torch runner was supposed to traverse.

The whole confluence of the snowstorm and the torch arriving created quite the buzz in Hanover. Would the torch still come? Could the runner make it through the snow? Would they change the route and skip Hanover all together? What crazy weather!

No one was 100% sure if the torch would arrive. But on Feb. 1, my family joined the entire population of Hanover at the edge of Studley Road to watch for its appearance. I was 9 years old and bundled up to my ears in snow gear. Studley Road was freshly plowed. My parents carried lanterns and stared down the street while my friends and I played in the deep snow. Then, it happened! Someone called out, "Look, flashing lights!" and everyone held their breath.

The runner passed right in front of us surrounded by a police escort. The lone figure carrying the torch was an incredible sight. I snapped a photo with my manual-crank film camera so that I'd never forget it. (It wasn't a great photo due to the lighting and has since been lost. But we still have a photo of my mom with my sister and I at the big event.)

"THE WHOLE CONFLUENCE OF THE SNOWSTORM AND THE TORCH ARRIVING CREATED QUITE THE BUZZ IN HANOVER. WOULD THE TORCH STILL COME? COULD THE RUNNER MAKE IT THROUGH THE SNOW? WOULD THEY CHANGE THE ROUTE AND SKIP HANOVER ALL TOGETHER?"

Just 11 days later, the U.S. men's ice hockey team beat out the team from the Soviet Union to win gold. It was Olympic history, and in a way, our community was a part of it!

In my estimation, the Olympics aren't as grand and captivating of an event now as they were back then, but there's still something magical about them, and I'll always remember that snowy moment in Hanover.

Do you remember the 1980 Winter Olympic Games? Have you ever seen the torch in person? Let me know the next time I see you! I'd love to swap stories.

-Kevin Mottley

DON'T SPEND ANOTHER YEAR LONELY!

5 WAYS TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS IN RETIREMENT



Friendship just might be the fourth secret to longevity, right behind eating well, exercising, and getting plenty of sleep. According to the Mayo Clinic, making friends can reduce stress, improve your self-confidence, and give you purpose in life! People with good friends are also more likely to exercise and less likely to drink to excess. But making friends is tough, especially in your golden years. To finally kick loneliness to the curb in 2022, try these five tips.

- 1. GET A DOG.** Adopting a dog (assuming you truly want one) will incentivize you to leave the house for walks, vet visits, and more. You'll likely attract new friends in the neighborhood when they stop to pet your pup, and you can also meet people at the dog park or obedience classes. If nothing else, you'll have your dogs in common!
- 2. JOIN A HOBBY GROUP.** The easiest way to find friends with similar interests is to pursue those interests. If you like to quilt, join a quilting group, and if you kayak, look for an outdoors club near you. Facebook is a great resource for finding online hobby groups, too! Just type your interest into the search bar and select "Groups" on the left-hand side of the screen.
- 3. VOLUNTEER.** Volunteering has similar benefits to joining a hobby group with the added benefit of giving back to the community! There's likely a cause for whatever you're interested in, whether that's food, animals, or sports. Visit VolunteerMatch.org to find opportunities in your area sorted by organization type.
- 4. MOVE TO A 55-PLUS COMMUNITY.** Also called retirement communities or active adult communities, these neighborhoods are known for their low-maintenance housing, amenities, and group activity options — and they're all over the U.S. If you want to find friends in your age group to swim and play tennis with, a local real estate agent can help you find them.
- 5. BECOME A MENTOR.** Mentorship is a valuable way to form friendships across generations. You can sign up for an existing program in the field you retired from or reach out to a local college or high school career center and offer your services. They'll likely have graduates who'd love to meet you!

PROTECT YOUR FAMILY'S BRAINS ON THE ROAD!

3 WAYS TO AVOID TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY



In last month's newsletter, we shared three tips for avoiding holiday falls in the office, including watching out for icy parking lots and keeping your eyes peeled for hazardous Christmas decorations or package piles. Those were important reminders, but work isn't the only place where you're at risk of a traumatic brain injury (TBI). You're also in danger on the road!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 17% of TBIs are caused by motor vehicle accidents, including car crashes, motorcycle accidents, and truck collisions. This can be even more common in the winter when icy Richmond roads, snow, and poor visibility make driving more dangerous. To keep your brain — and your family's brains — safe this winter, follow these three tips!

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY. If you feel dizzy, feel nauseous, or have vertigo, trust your body and do not get behind the wheel of a car. Everyone knows that it's not safe to drive under the influence of drugs and alcohol, but medical issues can unbalance us just as much. If you're not feeling well, stay put or call a friend or rideshare service for help.

ALWAYS DRIVE THE SPEED LIMIT. The faster you drive, the more traumatic your injuries will be if you're in an accident. Yes, you should go with the flow of traffic, but be careful not to speed, even if you're in a hurry. Even a few miles per hour could make a big difference in the event of an injury.

DOUBLE-CHECK YOUR KIDS' SAFETY SEATS. The CDC reminds us that one of the best ways to protect kids from TBIs in the event of a car crash is to make sure they're in age- and size-appropriate safety seats. These could be car seats, booster seats, or just correctly worn seat belts. Visit VDH.Virginia.gov/Child-Passenger-Safety for a Virginia child seat safety guide and make sure your kids who are 12 and under always ride in the back.

Of course, you should also wear your seat belt in the car, wear a helmet when riding a motorcycle, and practice defensive driving to avoid car crashes all together. That's just common sense!

WANT TO LEARN AN INSTRUMENT?

USE THIS PLATFORM TO GET STARTED

January is National Hobby Month, so, in my humble opinion, it's the perfect time to learn an instrument! As you might remember, one of my many hobbies is playing the bluegrass mandolin — but I didn't learn it by myself.

My No. 1 tip for learning an instrument is to find a great teacher through ArtistWorks.com. That's where I discovered Mike Marshall, one of the best acoustic mandolin players in the world. Mike lives in San Francisco and runs a mandolin school online. I love working with him, and I particularly like doing it through ArtistWorks.

Why? Well, there are a few reasons.

- First, I can access a world-class player like Mike without moving from Virginia to San Francisco.
- Second, since all of Mike's lessons and critiques of my playing are recorded (I send him a video of my practice session, and he sends back his thoughts), I can replay them over and over. This helps me learn more effectively than an in-person lesson where I'd only be able to hear my teacher's advice once.
- Third, I can take Mike's online lessons at my own pace. I don't have to wait a week between classes if I don't want to, and if I'm busy, I can go a month between lessons without the hassle of rescheduling.

Mandolin isn't the only instrument you can learn through ArtistWorks. If you want to play the guitar, bass, banjo, drums, harmonica, or anything else, there's a teacher out there for you! ArtistWorks even has vocal lessons. I highly recommend that platform. It keeps me motivated, even in tough years like 2021.



Last year, I set an ambitious goal to learn 20 fiddle tunes. I started off with a bang and reached 17 by July. But that month, I hit a wall. I didn't have the energy to learn new tunes again until December, but thanks to encouragement from Mike, I managed to learn three more and reach 20 tunes by the end of the year.

It's invaluable to have a mentor on your side when you're learning a new skill. If you want to learn an instrument this National Hobby Month, get started at ArtistWorks.com!

—Kevin Mottley

SUDOKU

		5		3		6		
	9	3			7	2		
			1	5				9
1	5				9	7	6	
		4	5		1			
3				4		1		
								7
2								4
8		1			5	9		

SOLUTION

6	9	5	9	7	2	1	4	8
2	6	8	3	5	6	7	8	1
7	1	4	8	2	9	5	3	6
3	2	7	4	8	1	9	6	5
6	8	1	3	5	6	7	4	9
4	7	4	5	6	1	3	8	2
1	5	8	3	2	9	7	6	4
7	8	2	1	5	6	4	9	3
6	3	4	8	7	2	1	5	9
4	1	5	9	3	2	7	6	8



CHICKEN WITH LEMON HERB SAUCE

Healthy eating doesn't have to be bland with this citrusy chicken!

INGREDIENTS

- 1/3 cup and 2 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 4 boneless chicken breasts
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup parsley, chopped
- 1/3 cup mint, chopped
- 1 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1 lemon, for juice and zest

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 450 F.
2. In a large ovenproof skillet, heat 2 tbsp olive oil.
3. Season chicken with salt and pepper if desired and sear it in the skillet for 3 minutes on each side. Bake chicken until its internal temperature is 165 F.
4. In a blender, add 1/3 cup olive oil, garlic, salt, parsley, mint, pepper, and lemon zest and juice and blend ingredients until coarsely mixed.
5. Top chicken with sauce and serve!