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Road Test

Sunday, February 10, 2002; Page E02

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Only a select few have mastered the art of sleeping in an airline coach seat. And the rest of us? We just fidget and fake it and get off the plane grumpy. We asked special correspondent Elissa Leibowitz to review some of the more helpful or unusual travel products that can help you catch some in-flight zzz's.

Travel pillows vary from cotton-candy cushions to saddlelike headrests. Our faves? Bucky Products' horseshoe-shape Utopia pillow is filled with buckwheat hulls, while its ultra-firm Beau pillow (right) is covered in pseudo-suede and stuffed with millet. The Cascade Design Deluxe Pillow (left), with a drawstring that makes it curl up like a hedge-hog when you're not using it, is lush, soft and easily packable.

Utopia (\$29.95) and Beau (\$39.95) pillows from Bucky Products Inc. (800-692-8259, www.bucky.com). Deluxe Pillow (\$18) from Walkabout Travel Gear (800-852-7085, www.walkabouttravelgear.com).

Let's face it, listening to a babbling brook or crashing ocean while trying to sleep only makes you have to go to the bathroom. Much more soothing are the sounds of your furnace, dishwasher and dryer, which Sleep Machines.com has recorded onto hour-long CDs. Fortunately, they don't include Dad cursing when the furnace breaks down.

\$13.95 each. Sleep Machines.com, 800-479-2672, www.sleepmachines.com.

The looks we got from fellow passengers when inflating the SnoozWedge were almost enough to make us stuff the body-length pillow back into its sack. But we carried on, filling up the device by attaching its hose to our seat's overhead air nozzle. Then we slid and squirmed, trying (unsuccessfully) to get comfortable. Folks on longer flights or with serious back problems might have more patience and better luck.

\$79.95. VisualApproach Corp., 866-766-6946, www.snoozwedge.com.

Most noise-reduction headphones cost big bucks -- that's why we were drawn to the reasonably priced Noisebuster Extreme, which works by counteracting sound waves with complementary ones. While not as effective in masking engine drone and baby screams as some of its higher-priced peers, we found that the Noisebuster Extreme still made for a substantially quieter flight.

\$45. Travelproducts.com, 800-917-4616, www.travelproducts.com.

After you take off, inflate the cube-shaped LapNap, rest it in your lap and bend at the waist. Then snooze. The cube, which comes in adult and child sizes, has a comfy flocked top so your face won't stick to it. It's a bit bulky, and your seatmates will stare, but it's still a terrific sleep aid.

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\$12.99. Zanadu Enterprises, www.galaxymall.com/merchandise/lapnap.

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