

10 Tips to Speed Through Airport Lines

(Courtesy of The Discoverer, Jersey Griggs)

When you're trying to catch a flight, airport lines are a gigantic hassle. Between checking your luggage and getting through security, lines at the airport are simply a part of air travel — but with the right strategies, there are plenty of ways to save time. ***Here are 10 tips for speeding through airport lines so you can arrive at the gate on time and stress-free.***

Get TSA PreCheck

It requires extra leg work, but signing up for [TSA PreCheck](#) is one of the best ways to sail through security lines at the airport. The process requires a brief online application followed by an \$85 five-year membership fee, an in-person interview, a background check, and finger-printing. Once you're approved, you'll be able to go through the designated PreCheck line, which doesn't require all of the obstacles that hold up security lines — like removing liquids and electronic devices and taking off your shoes.

Apply for Global Entry

If you travel internationally, applying for [Global Entry](#) is an excellent way to avoid those daunting customs lines. Similar to TSA PreCheck, Global Entry allows for low-risk, pre-approved travelers to receive expedited service in the airport. The application costs \$100 for a five-year membership. As members of the "Trusted Travelers Program," these travelers can skip the customs lines after disembarking the plane by using the Global Entry kiosks. Not only do the kiosks read passports, but they also scan fingerprints and allow travelers to declare goods electronically.

Become a Frequent Flyer

There are a lot of benefits to [frequent flyer programs](#), but one major perk is speeding through airport lines. When you become an elite member of an airline program, benefits include designated check-in lines, exclusive security lanes, and priority boarding. Altogether, these advantages translate to spending less time in line, which means there's more time for a drink at your preferred airline's lounge.

Sign Up for Clear

If you want to skip airport lines entirely, then signing up for [Clear](#) is the way to go. Certified by Homeland Security and available at over 50 U.S. airports, the private company uses biometric technology to scan your irises and fingerprints, turning them into an encrypted code that is unique only to you. You just need to pay the \$179 annual fee. The technology negates the need for any traditional ID documents and once approved, you can bypass the TSA checkpoint for IDs and skip ahead to the front of the PreCheck line.

Download MiFlight

[MiFlight](#) is another technological solution to avoiding long lines at the airport. The crowd-sourcing app keeps track of how many people are waiting in line at security checkpoints throughout airports across

the world. Use MiFlight to decide when to leave for the airport or to decipher which security checkpoint will get you to your gate the fastest.

Use Mobile and Curbside Check-In

Waiting in line to check-in is never fun, but it can be avoided. If you're not checking bags, using mobile check-in is the easiest way to skip these lines entirely. Just remember to check-in online 24 hours before you're scheduled to depart. If you need to check luggage, then using curbside check-in is a simple way to speed up the entire process. The service has noticeably shorter lines and is available at several major airports — just don't forget to tip your baggage handler.

Avoid Certain Travel Days

Being strategic when booking your travel dates is a straightforward way to avoid long lines at the airport. It's a no-brainer that traveling around major holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas results in busy airports, so if you're looking to avoid lines altogether, it's best to steer clear of these dates. Otherwise, try not to fly during peak travel times, like Fridays and Mondays. Wednesday is typically the slowest day for airlines, so flying midweek is a good way to circumvent airport lines.

Know the Rules

TSA has a lot of rules, and if you want to breeze through security, it's best to know them by heart. Liquids in your carry-on must pass the [3-1-1 rule](#), which means you're allowed a clear quart-sized bag of liquids, aerosols, gels, and creams as long as they are less than 3.4 ounces or 100 milliliters. Since they violate the 3-1-1 rule, water bottles must be empty and lattes are a no-go, so it's best to wait to get your caffeine fix once you're safely in the terminal.

Pick the Right Suitcase

Speaking of the rules, choosing the right [carry-on suitcase](#) is instrumental in streamlining airport security. Since any liquids you pack will need to be screened separately, using luggage with a large outer pocket, like [this one from TravelPro](#), makes it easier to remove your liquids from your bag without holding up the line. If you're flying with a laptop or tablet, try to find luggage that is designed to carry a computer. This [backpack from Cotopaxi](#) has a designated sleeve for electronics, so you don't need to spend a lot of time unzipping luggage to remove your laptop for security.

Wear Appropriate Clothing

Dressing for air travel is somewhat of an art form, and once you find a formula that works for you, it can feel like magic. In addition to wearing comfortable clothing for your flight, dressing appropriately for security is essential. Wearing slip-on shoes will make it easy to sail through security without spending too much time on shoelaces. And since jewelry such as bangles, necklaces, and metal watches will only set off the screening alarms, make sure to keep accessories to a minimum.