

Custom Flight Comfort

WOMAN'S TRAVEL PILLOW SLEEVE, STUFFED WITH YOUR HOODIE OR SWEATER, DOUBLES AS STORAGE **BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN**

DUBBED THE “perfect post-pandemic travel product,” Flight Fillow—created by Georgia Wilson of Grapevine, Texas—is simple but unique.

For many, it's annoying as heck to schlep those inflatable travel neck pillows on flights along with your carry-ons, overhead luggage and even meals. This innovation is a combination neck pillow and traditional pillow, as well as ideal storage for your rolled-up hoodie or sweater (the pillow's stuffing). It was recently featured on The Grommet.

Edith G. Tolchin (EGT): Are you a frequent traveler?

Georgia Wilson (GW): I used to be a frequent traveler, but my travel frequency has slowed down since having my daughter in late 2022. Now that she is getting older and easier to travel with, I plan to go on a lot more trips soon. Twenty-twenty-five will be a fun, travel-filled year for us.

EGT: What are the product's unique features?

GW: It fits in your pocket; makes it easy to carry, with none of the bulk and

hassle you deal with trying to pack the standard U-shaped neck pillow. It's machine washable: It easily gives you a clean slate for each trip!

Use your own sweater, hoodie, or jacket for stuffing—something you are already packing for your trip.

You can adjust it to your own comfort. Whether you are in the mood for a thinner neck pillow or something thicker with more support, this one Flight Fillow will do the trick. The thickness of the garment you choose determines the thickness of the Flight Fillow support.

Want a thinner neck pillow? Use a thinner sweater. If you want a thicker neck pillow, simply use a thicker hoodie or jacket.

Newer versions of Flight Fillow have a small pocket on the inside for your small items such as headphones, ChapStick or an eye mask, so you can easily find them in your carry on without having to dig to the bottom of your bag. (This feature is only available on the blue, black and gray Flight Fillows sold on Amazon Prime.)

EGT: Did it take you many prototypes to get to that “aha!” moment when you knew you had the perfect product?

GW: When I first made Flight Fillow, it didn't



The thickness of the garment you choose determines the thickness of the Flight Fillow support.



have a name. I invented it for my personal use. It was a poorly sewn prototype that I made with my dad, using my parents' sewing machine.

It didn't look like anything special, but it was a proof of concept and worked for turning my sweater into a neck pillow and holding it in place—so it wouldn't lose its firmness or shape when I moved around in my seat.

EGT: Where are you selling?

GW: Flight Fillow is sold on Amazon, walmart.com and flightfillow.com, as well as some in small boutique retailers. It sells for \$22.97.

EGT: What materials are used?

GW: Flight Fillow is made from nylon-spandex fabric and has a polyester zipper.

EGT: How was your experience working with The Grommet?

GW: I love working with The Grommet. Ever since our launch day, we have had a handful of sales from the platform, and every time there is an email blast that features Flight Fillow, there is another spike in sales that follows.

EGT: Where are you manufacturing?

GW: Flight Fillows are handsewn in the United States by individual seamstresses.

I love the personal touch of being able to give employment to individuals and work directly with them. This does pose challenges—such as longer production times, more logistics to oversee, higher cost to produce, and small variations between the products due to being handsewn by various individuals. But I believe the benefits outweigh the challenges—at least for this season of Flight Fillow!

EGT: Are you anticipating swimming with the “Sharks”?

GW: I auditioned for Season 11 of “Shark Tank” and made it to the third round. Ultimately, they did not select me to move forward, but I am grateful for the opportunity as it really helped me to get into the “done is better than perfect” mindset. My business made great strides in little time.

EGT: Is Flight Fillow patented?

GW: Yes, Flight Fillow is patented. I first filed for

a provisional patent application; that was a lot more affordable than filing for a full utility patent. I used the year to bring my product to market and prove to myself that this idea was worth the investment of filing a full utility patent.

At one point I considered filing for the patent myself to save the cost of lawyer fees, but after some research I learned that no patent is better than a bad patent. After deciding to use a lawyer to aid with the process, their expertise proved invaluable. I am very grateful I elected to go that route.



Georgia Wilson's invention was recently featured on The Grommet.

EGT: Have you had any snafus in product development or fulfillment?

GW: I have run into a plethora of hurdles! If I knew ahead of time all the hurdles that I would have to overcome, I would have been too scared to move forward with bringing my idea to life.

However, ignorance is bliss, as it has brought me this far. I view each hurdle as a learning experience. You either win or you learn.

EGT: What advice do you have for novice inventors?

GW: The whole patent process from start to finish is expensive. I am glad I went the provisional patent route first, to give me time to see whether this idea would be a good investment or not.

Make sure you have the funds or capital available (or a solid plan for where the funds will come from) before you go down the path of a full patent, because it can be expensive to respond to USPTO objections. The maintenance fees on the patents aren't cheap, and if anyone were to infringe on your patent you will need funds to do something about it. 📞

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Edith G. Tolchin has written for *Inventors Digest* since 2000 (edietolchin.com/portfolio). She is the author of several books, including “Secrets of Successful Women Inventors” (<https://a.co/d/fAGlvZJ>) and “Secrets of Successful Inventing” (<https://a.co/d/8dafJd6>).



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