



Healthy Flying



Summarized from the book by Diana Fairchild 1995 Flyana Rhyme Inc

How Do I Trounce Jet-lag?

Jet-lag is caused by a complex combination of circumstances. First, there are the environmental deviations of traveling -- shifts in time, alterations in magnetic fields, modifications in climate, and diversities in cultures. As if this weren't enough, flying in commercial jets we are forced into a sickening environment where we are deprived of air and humidity while exposed to radiation, pesticides, and pollution.

Jet-lag affects us physically, mentally, and emotionally. A physical example is swollen feet. A mental example is disorientation. An emotional one is anxiety. Swollen feet are caused by the low air pressure on board and lack of circulation from sitting for long periods without moving. To remedy this, wear slippers or large travel shoes and periodically walk around.

Abstaining from alcoholic beverages in flight (and drinking lots of water instead), is both a physical and a mental remedy -- it helps to offset dehydration, and it promotes mental clarity.

Travelers experience less jet-lag when they skip all airplane food! It's typically high in fat, salt, and sugar, and low in carbohydrates. Moreover, it's difficult to digest in flight with your intestines all swollen from the airplane's low air pressure. Either FAST (drink plenty of fluids but avoid solid foods between your departure location and your arrival destination) or bring along CARBOHYDRATE SNACKS (these help you function more effectively and think more clearly at higher altitudes).

Flying west usually causes less jet-lag than flying east. This is because eastbound travel crunches the day to less than 24 hours, so at bedtime we're not sleepy and then it's hard to get up in the morning. To help reset your biological cycles, set your watch to the local time at your arrival destination when you first board your flight. Sleep on board if your flight lands in the morning and avoid sleeping on board if your flight lands in the evening. When you land, try taking a hot, candlelight bath instead of sleeping pills.

When you first arrive, schedule work or other important activity at a time when you are likely to have maximum energy, (i.e., in the evenings, after jetting east, or in the mornings, after jetting west). To help speed up acclimatization, spend some time outdoors every day during daylight hours. Even being in a room with windows helps to enlighten our body clocks. Natural light automatically cues our cells to the new local cosmology.

Along with the adoption of the local bedtime to help you quickly adjust to the new time zone, try doing what the locals: their food preference, meal times, recreational activities, and even the way they dress. If you can do only one thing at first, though, make a determination to adjust your bedtime to the new, local timetable as soon as possible.

Jet-lag is not psychological; it is cycle logical. All our internal cycles (temperature, sleep, cravings for sweets, reactions to medications) are programmable, like computers. Program yours to bounce back from jet-lag with adaptability and resilience by focusing your thoughts and feelings on your desired goals -- determine to enjoy well-being as you skirt the globe.

How Should Jet Travelers Pack?

Lightly! Hand-carrying a little luggage requires less fortitude than later losing a lot of luggage. According to Consumer Reports, 8% of passengers who check luggage report something lost or stolen. Airline liability for luggage lost on US-domestic flights is limited to \$1250; on international flights it is only \$635. In addition, you must prove your claim with receipts, and they always depreciate the value of your things, rather than replace them. When preparing baggage for check-in, remember: it's easier to make a list of your effects while you are packing (video or photograph them) then to reconstruct one under duress.

Be sure to bring enough things in your carry-ons to manage for a couple of days, just in case. Always hand carry your prescriptions, travel documents, money, and valuables. Other items which you may want to consider taking in your carry-ons are:

- Bottled water
- Spritzer
- Cotton handkerchief
- Local currency of your arrival destination
- Carbohydrate snacks
- Socks and slippers
- Sweater or shawl
- Inflatable neck pillow

- Ear plugs
- Eye-mask inscribed with the message "do not disturb"
- Body oil for skin and inside of nose
- Sleeping pills

Another reason to limit your baggage to carry-ons is that most airline baggage compartments are regularly pesticided -- so our effects can become contaminated!

Here's how to pack smart so you can keep it to carry-ons:

- Before you choose your clothing, do a visualization, i.e. imagine you are sitting in a movie theater, the picture comes on and you see yourself at your destination. Watch several scenes. (What are you wearing?)
- Miniaturize toiletries.
- Wear heaviest clothing for flight, in layers. Your carry-ons will be lighter and you'll be comfortable as the climate changes en route (sometimes the plane is drafty, sometimes it's stuffy).
- After landing, buy local duds to look local. You'll be treated more like an insider.
- Ship stuff home.

How Do We Prevent Dehydration When We Fly??

The in-flight air is drier than any of the world's deserts. Typically, relative humidity is 20-25% in the Sahara or Arabian deserts, while optimum comfort is around 50%. "In-flight cabin humidities gradually fall on long-distance, high-altitude flights to well below 10%, in many cases approaching 1%." (Air Conditioning Tests, Boeing Report No. T6-4453-B747SP, 1976). In-flight dryness can create thirst, scratchy eyes, bloodshot eyes, dry skin (even wrinkles), and backed-up plumbing. Yipes!

Steps To Take To Offset In-flight Dehydration:

- Drink at least 8 ounces of water every hour en route;
- Carry your own bottle of drinking water when you fly, to sip on when service is not available (right after takeoff or when the bar carts close prior to landing);
- En route, drink bottled or canned water rather than the tap water. There are presently no standards for commercial aircraft water tanks, for cleanliness, treatment procedures, nor water quality in cities around the world where commercial jets refill;
- Avoid alcohol and coffee; they have diuretic properties, i.e., they squeeze water out of our cells;
- Spritz your face often; use an empty perfume atomizer and refill it from your own drinking water or buy a water spritzer (used for

ironing);

- Apply eye cream below eyes and oil inside nostrils (almond oil smells nice; jojoba oil is also good and a little thicker; olive oil is excellent, too, and definitely in the flow on flights to Rome);
- For humidified breathing air, cover your nose with a water-saturated cotton handkerchief. (Fold on the diagonal and wrap ends around your ears.) You might feel self-conscious, thinking you look like a masked bandit. Are your seatmates snickering? You'll see, on the next flight there will be more masked bandits. One day, you'll walk on an airplane and everyone will have a hankie over his/her nose. Will this inspire the airlines to humidify their jets? Let's hope so;
- After landing, submerge and soak in the water as soon as possible -- the ocean, a hot tub, a pool, a bath, whatever is available that you enjoy. Immerse entirely, even and especially your head. Bathing when dehydrated helps to replenish moisture right through the pores. Bathing also relaxes the nervous system.

Basically, there's no way to avoid the fact that your body will become dehydrated to some degree as a result of flying long distances in near-zero humidity in commercial jet cabins. We need to be mindful of our water intake en route, and also remember to drink plenty of pure water for several days after landing. Without adequate water intake both health and inspiration quickly deteriorate. That's why I do whatever it takes.

How Do We Protect Our Ears When We Fly?

If you plan to fly and have a head cold, please consider canceling out of compassion for your plane-mates. It's common knowledge that viruses recirculate in the recycled cabin air. A note from your doctor will ensure you do not have to pay a "no-show" penalty when you cancel. If you do have to fly, however, consider donning a surgical mask to keep your germs to yourself -- AND watch out for your ears! As aircraft descend, pressure increases, and this can cause excruciating pain in the ear. Invisible help is available, however, aboard every plane in the sky. Here's how to clear your blocked ears on a commercial flight. You'll need a cup, a paper napkin, and some hot water:

1. Go to any drinking fountain on board and you'll find little wax-coated drinking cups;
2. Take the cup to the galley and get a paper cocktail napkin;
3. Put the napkin in the bottom of the cup;
4. Ask the flight attendant to add boiling water from the galley hot-water spigot;
5. Drain off all the water;
6. Lean your head down and sideways towards the cup to cover your

blocked ear. BE CAREFUL that none of the hot water gets in the ear!

7. As the steam reaches into the ear, the eustachians automatically clear and pain can ease immediately;
8. Remember to keep yourself warm.

How Do You Snag Shut-Eye at 30,000 Feet?

Sleeping aloft can definitely impact the overall success of a journey -- especially on "red-eyes" eastbound where sleep en route expedites jet-lag clearance. For those passengers who have trouble sleeping on jets, there's always time lost catching up later -- whether at home, on business, or on vacation.

Cocoon Yourself: Use the airline blanket and pillow (be sure to claim a set before taking your seat), and sweater and socks to swaddle yourself. Fasten seatbelt loosely outside blanket; otherwise, in the event of turbulence, flight attendants may wake you to request that you buckle up.

Improvise:

- Unfasten the velcro of your head rest cushion and relocate it behind the small of your back to provide extra recline;
- Position airline pillow behind your head, neck pillow, sweater, and socks;
- Place moistened handkerchief over your nose;
- Keep a bottle of drinking water within reach to sip from and to re-moisten your hankie during intermittent awakenings;
- If you're on a red-eye jetting east you may want to lower your window shade; otherwise, the dawn will come up before you know it;
- If you're small enough to curl up on two seats, and lucky enough to have two seats, lift the armrest, then nest it between the seatbacks. Fasten the male end of one seatbelt to the female end of the other seatbelt (over your blanket).

Set Your Mental Alarm: Tell your subconscious to awaken you when the new, high-pitched whine of the engines signals the top of descent (about 25 minutes before landing on long flights).

Physical Takeoff: After the aircraft's wheel's leave the runway:

- Don your ear plugs and eye-mask;
- Recline your seat;
- Reposition your under-seat baggage as a foot rest;

- Doze off with the extra g-force of the ascent;

Sweet dreams!



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