

# BOARDING NOW: your BEST FLIGHT ever!

Don't let worries about flying dampen your excitement for a holiday abroad. Here's how to look after your body and mind in the sky

There's so much to love about a summer holiday. From learning about new cultures and trying delicious food to relaxing with loved ones, these are the moments to switch off and escape everyday stresses. But you're not alone if the prospect of getting on a plane fills you with dread. We asked the experts for their advice on feeling comfortable and calm on the flight so you arrive ready to enjoy your break.

## Tackle motion sickness 4 natural tips for calming nausea

Feeling nauseous when you travel is common; it's estimated one in three people get motion sickness. In fact, neuro-otologist Dr Surenthiran says motion sickness is more common in women, particularly in line with hormonal changes.

Research suggests that those who suffer from migraines are more likely to experience motion sickness.

Dr Surenthiran's top tips:

- 1 CHOOSE YOUR SEATS CAREFULLY** When booking your plane tickets, try to reserve seats either towards the front of the plane, or over the wings where you are likely to feel less motion. Aisle seats are a better choice than windows.
  - 2 DRINK SMART** Drinks containing caffeine or alcohol can irritate your stomach and increase the production of acid, making you more vulnerable to motion sickness.
  - 3 TRY ESSENTIAL OILS** Some people have found putting a few drops of peppermint oil or ginger and lavender oils on a handkerchief and inhaling them has an anti-sickness effect.
  - 4 EAT WISELY** Avoid foods that are hard for the stomach to digest – greasy foods, meat, milk and cheese, for example. Toast, crackers and bananas are easier to digest. Consume smaller amounts than usual.
- IF NONE OF THESE HELP...** Try medications such as cyclizine, cinnarizine, Promethazine and scopolamine patches. Speak to a pharmacist.



## Ease travel anxiety

Do you catastrophise about worst-case scenarios before you even get to the airport? Psychologist Dr Meg Arroll, author of *Tiny Traumas*, has these tips...

**GET ORGANISED** You'll feel more relaxed by knowing you have taken care of everything you can control by placing all your important documents in a holder and downloading any apps you might want to use while away, such as audiobooks and travel guides.

**DISTRACT YOURSELF** Guided meditations, breathing exercises and calming music can help keep you distracted on a flight. If you



Keep useful apps to hand

already practise these techniques, they'll become second nature to you by the time you're feeling anxious on the plane.

**BREATHE** You can manage the feeling of panic with a diaphragmatic breathing exercise that will halt the stress response. Breathe in for a count of three and make sure your belly rises, then out for a count of four so that your tummy dips back against your spine.



Stretch every hour during a flight to keep your muscles loose and help circulate more blood to those shortened muscles.

## 4 cabin crew insider tips

Who knows more about flying than flight attendants? Anuli Eze, cabin crew for Virgin Atlantic, shares her advice for a happy, comfortable flight...

- 1 MOISTURISE** Cabin air can be drying and dehydrating, so invest in a good moisturiser to look after your skin in flight. Apply it a couple of times throughout the flight to lock in moisture, and always pack lip balm, too!
- 2 STAY FRESH** Take a light and comfy change of clothes with you on the flight – a pair of tracksuit bottoms allows you

to relax and ensures your other clothes stay wrinkle-free throughout your journey.

- 3 BE KIND TO YOUR BODY** If you wear contact lenses, pack your glasses because those lenses will start to dry up. Make an effort to walk around the cabin and stretch your legs; keep your body moving and not static for hours. Virgin Atlantic has wellness content on its inflight entertainment system, including tips and exercises for neck, shoulder and lower back discomfort.

- 4 DRINK UP** At high altitudes, our bodies lose water faster than usual, so it's important to stay hydrated. For flavoured water, I recommend putting some cut-up fruit in an empty bottle before you leave for the airport. Hydration is also key for combating jet lag. ➔



## Stretch it out

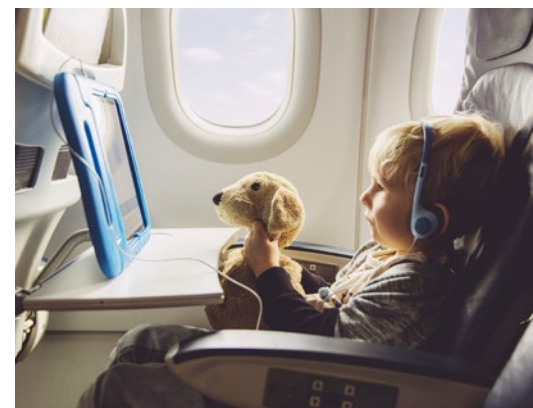
Ever get off a flight feeling achy and stiff? That's because when you're sitting on a plane, your muscles are shortened for a long period of time, which can make them tight when you stand again. Since your legs could be bent for hours, it's hard for your blood to circulate and nourish your muscles, causing pain. If you're not able to move about on a flight, physiologist Albert Matheny suggests three stretches you can do while sitting:

- ARM CROSS** Stretch your right arm over to your left side. Hold it with your left arm. Do two or three sets of 20- to 30-sec holds each side, alternate sides.
- ANKLE OVER OPPOSITE KNEE** Place your left ankle over your right knee and press down on your left leg above the knee. Do two or three sets of 20- to 30-sec holds each side, alternate sides.
- LEG EXTENSION** Stretch your left leg out in front (as far as you can) and hold. Switch legs and repeat. That's one rep. Do five sets of five-second holds.

## Keep the little ones happy and quiet

Virgin Atlantic's Anuli Eze suggests...

- SURPRISE AND DELIGHT** Bring a couple of new toys or books on board that can be wrapped and opened throughout the flight.
- KNOW YOU'RE NOT ALONE** Speak to crew as they can provide you with emergency essentials (such as nappies) and offer a helping hand.



## Eat right in flight

Top tips from Jennifer Medhurst, aka 'The Imperfect Nutritionist', author of *7 Principles Of Healthy Eating* (jennifermehurst.com):

### ● CHOOSE LIQUID FOODS WHEN YOU CAN

Soups, stews and curries are usually heated multiple times at temperatures that are likely to kill bacteria, making them the safest in-flight options.

### ● AVOID FIZZY DRINKS AND

**CAFFEINE** as these can affect your bowel habits and make you feel uncomfortable on your flight. Instead, drink plenty of water; frequent sips are better than one glass at a time.

● **PACK SNACKS** such as dried fruits, hard cheese, boiled eggs or nuts (depending on restrictions).

Avoid anything too salty, as salt can cause your body to hold on to water leading to water retention, which can feel uncomfortable while flying.



## 'Avoid too much salt, which can lead to water retention'

### Beat jet lag

When you cross time zones, your circadian rhythm (the 24-hour cycle that signals when to sleep and wake) goes haywire, causing fatigue and anxiety. So: **EMBRACE THE LIGHT** 'If you arrive in daytime, get out in the sunlight to sync your sleep/wake cycle,' says Dr Alanna Hare, a consultant in sleep medicine.

**BE SIESTA SMART** Keep naps under 20 minutes and early-ish in the day to avoid disturbing night slumber. 'Some people find that drinking coffee just before a 20-minute doze helps them feel more energised on waking,' says Dr Hare, as caffeine can take time to metabolise.

### SET YOUR WATCH TO LOCAL TIME

The quicker you start working towards new eating and bedtime routines, the quicker you'll adapt, so change your phone clock or watch when you set off.



### Did you know?

Your perception of saltiness and sweetness falls by around 30% in the air. So airlines give in-flight food an extra kick by seasoning it more.

## IN-FLIGHT ESSENTIALS TO PACK IN YOUR HAND LUGGAGE



● This wrap-around travel pillow from Trtl has hidden internal support to keep your neck upright while sleeping. Bonus: it's less than half the size and weight of an average neck pillow, making it perfect for your baggage allowance (£39.99, uk.trtltravel.com)

● The new AVogel Passiflora Complex Spray (£12.99, 20ml, avogel.co.uk) contains calming passiflora, lemon balm and zinc to provide on-the-go relief as it can fit in your pocket or handbag. Spray the dose into your mouth at times of anxiety.



● To help keep your feet from swelling, wear these compression socks from Not Your Grandma's. They're feather soft and come in all sorts of patterns (£15, notyourgrandmas.co.uk)