

# Natural treatments for in-flight problems



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## Introduction

Air travel is a fact of modern life, something that even the youngest child now takes for granted. If you want to get from point A to point B, flying is generally the quickest option – sometimes the only option, especially if it involves overseas travel – and with prices at an all time low, anyone and everyone can fly nowadays.

This ability to jet off to all corners of the globe is one that has allowed people greater travel freedoms than they have ever had before, but for some, this freedom comes with a price tag attached. Not everyone is a good flyer, and certainly, not everyone actually enjoys flying.

For instance, whilst statistics compiled by the [US Department of Transport](#) suggest that flying is 29 times safer than travelling in an automobile, many people are simply terrified of getting on a plane. There are many examples of famous people whose careers have certainly not been helped by their inability to fly overseas – in top level soccer, [Dennis Bergkamp](#) is one very famous [aviophobic](#) or non-flyer – but the downsides of flying do not necessarily end there.

The fact is that there are several aspects of flying apart from the simple fear of getting on the plane in the first place that can cause intending travelers immense problems or difficulties.

The purpose of this book is to examine every possible problem that people might have with flying and more importantly, how you overcome these difficulties in a totally natural way.

If you have a problem getting on a plane, this manual is going to show you how to overcome that fear. If motion or travel sickness is a malady that you are susceptible to, you are going to learn how to overcome that difficulty too.

No matter what your problem is with flying, you are going to learn how to get past those difficulties so that flying will never again be a problem for you. What is more, you are going to learn how to get over these difficulties totally naturally too.

# Fear of flying

## If you are scared of flying...

There are many thousands of people all over the world who are terrified of flying. And whilst some are scared because of a previous bad experience, probably the majority of these aviophobics have had no previous adverse flying experience at all. They are just scared of flying, it is as simple as that.

However, if you are to have any chance of dealing with the problem, you have to be able to answer the question of why people are frightened of flying in the first place.

For some people, it will undoubtedly have something to do with the fact that almost all major catastrophes that involve aircraft are widely reported in the newspapers and on TV.

After all, because major aircraft incidents sometimes involve several hundred fatalities, it's big news. On the other hand, the average automobile accident is unlikely to cause any more than one or two fatalities at worst (although it is far more likely that there will be no fatalities whatsoever) and perhaps regrettably for those involved, there is no 'news' in this.

Thus, many people get on a planes focusing on the fact that planes crash because that is all they ever read in the newspaper or see on TV. But the fact is that for every plane that crashes, there are millions – literally, millions – of flights that begin and end with no drama whatsoever, no more exciting or scary than a bus ride down town or a quick two stops on the subway.

And equally obviously, successful flights never hit the news because given the safety statistics associated with flying, every daily newspaper would have to be a couple of thousand pages thick if every successful (and boringly) completed flight were to be reported.

The truth is, flying is ultra-safe but you never read about that fact.

Hence, if your fear of flying is based on the fact that planes crash, yes, they do but the odds of you being on a plane that hits the side of a mountain or bursts into flames are [many millions to one against](#), especially if you are flying with one of the top airlines:

## Odds of being involved in a fatal accident

Odds of being on an airline flight which results in at least one fatality	Odds of being killed on a single airline flight
Top 25 airlines with the best records 1 in 8.47 million	Top 25 airlines with the best records 1 in 13.57 million
Bottom 25 with the worst records 1 in 830,428	Bottom 25 with the worst records 1 in 1.13 million

Source: OAG Aviation & PlaneCrashInfo.com accident database, 1989 - 2008

Hence, even if you are flying with an airline that has a safety record that ranks amongst the worst (and if you are scared of flying, this is probably not an especially good idea), you are probably going to have to get on an airplane at least a million times to guarantee that your worst fears come true. If you live to be one hundred years old, you are going to enjoy 36,525 days on this earth, so you would need to take quite a few flights every day to reach this target!

Of course this is taking things to an absurd extreme, but it does serve to highlight the fact that being scared of flying per se is pretty absurd in itself. The logic does not however get away from the fact that many people are terrified of flying, so we need to establish why this should be the case and what you can do to get over this fear if you are a bad flyer.

The first thing to understand is what the fear of flying really is, because if you know that there is an far higher chance of getting killed in a car crash than there is on a plane, your fear cannot be based on the fact that a plane is transportation in the same way that a car or bus is.

Some people will suggest that they are scared of flying because the idea of sitting in a metal tube at 35,000 feet above the earth is so unnatural, but that does not make a great deal of sense either. Driving around in your car is no more natural than flying and very few people are scared of being in a car. This is not therefore particularly convincing argument either.

The truth is that the fear of flying has little to do with risk as such because whilst there is a risk of an accident whilst flying, that risk is considerably lower than it would be in a car, and after all, there is a risk attached to everything in life.

What makes a plane different to a car is that in a car, you retain a degree of control (even if we are not driving) and you are on the ground. Once you are in a plane and they shut the doors, that's it, your

trapped and you suddenly feel very vulnerable and threatened. You have no control, because your fate is now 100% in the hands of the crew, and you've never even met them!

You are more aware than at perhaps any other time that you are vulnerable and that life is fragile and that whilst moving around on the ground is perfectly normal, flying through the air is not.

In essence, a fear of flying is a type of anxiety disorder, a specific phobia or fear that cannot necessarily be easily overcome by trying not to think about it. As an anxiety, you are scared of the unknown, worrying about what might happen rather than something that will happen or what is happening right at this moment.

For most people, fear of flying is a combination of many factors or fears that they have. For instance, many people are scared of heights, whereas others feel uncomfortable in crowded places or in an enclosed space. Then there is that fact that a stranger has complete control over your destiny whilst others (ground engineers and the like) could have made one tiny error that has effectively sealed your fate even before the plane taxis out to the runway to take off.

Everyone knows that you cannot control your fate or your future but if you suffer from a fear of flying, this is effectively what you are trying to do on a psychological level. Consequently, worrying about the future will cause physical and emotional upset in exactly the same way as would something genuinely happening.

If for example there was smoke pouring out of the engine and the pilot was attempting an emergency landing, your emotional and physical reaction would probably be the same as the reaction generated by the fear that something like this might happen.

As a general rule, people who suffer from a fear of flying will most commonly suffer one or both of two adverse reactions.

Firstly, they may suffer on a physical level, perhaps feeling sweaty or dizzy, being dry mouthed with a pale or flushed complexion. They might feel abdominal pains, muscle tensions or tremors, have difficulty breathing or feel heart palpitations.

On the other hand or in addition, some people suffer on a psychological level so that they suddenly have poor or misguided judgment, narrowed perceptions or negative expectations.

The key to the fear of flying is that you are trapped on that plane, and that is far too much like being trapped in a coffin which for many people is their worst nightmare. As anyone who has suffered from a fear of flying knows, once you overcome your fear, this does not mean that

you are any less well aware of the small risk involved in getting on the plane – it is just that you have learned to accept those risks as a natural part of life.

So, how do you overcome this fear?

Research into the thought processes of people who are afraid of flying has indicated that there are four different types of thinking associated with fear.

People who fear flying:

- Can usually think of nothing other than flying and how unpleasant it is both before and during the flight;
- Usually indulge in self blame, thinking about all the mistakes they have made;
- Often resign themselves to their fate, simply accepting that they have to be scared and that they can change nothing;
- Will catastrophize, that is, they think of all the terrible things that *could* happen.

Taken together, what this means is that if you fear flying, you'll probably spend a great deal of time thinking about it and worrying about it beforehand. Furthermore, once you are on the plane and your flight begins, you're going to focus on the unpleasant physical and psychological effects that you feel, making the whole of your journey a time of misery.

You will blame yourself for all your mistakes and errors, you will tell yourself that there is nothing you can do about the mistakes and thoughts about all of the terrible things that might happen will preoccupy your mind.

Thus, if you want to tackle your fear of flying, you have to deal with all of these different psychological processes separately, because it is only by bringing each of these different feelings under control that you can conquer the totality of your fear.

The first thing to do is go back to the statistics as the facts very clearly show that even if you do not have any control in a plane, it is still the safest form of travel by a significant margin. The reality is, the chances of you even being in a plane accident are almost infinitesimally small, and no matter which way you look at it, facts are facts.

Next, think back to all of the times that you have flown before. Have there ever been any major, life-threatening incidents or occurrences that you personally have experienced? The chances are that for the vast

majority of people, the answer to this question is going to be 'no' so you have already seen plenty of evidence that flying is extremely safe.

Can you calculate the number of times you have flown in your life? It doesn't have to be an exact number, just an approximation is good enough.

Now, go back to the stats again and using a worst case scenario, assume that you are flying with an airline with an awful safety record, there is still only one chance in 830,428 that you are ever going to be on a plane where there is a least one fatality.

How many flights have you been on, and how close to that number are you? Not very close I would be willing to bet, so once again, the statistical chances of being in this situation (where someone else dies, not you) are minimal.

From here, you have to start applying a little logical, adult thought to the four psychological factors were looking at earlier.

For a start, there is no point in worrying about flying for days or weeks in advance. It is either going to happen and you have to do it or you cancel your flight and don't go where you were planning to go. Take a deep breath, stand back from the situation and forget about it. It is it going to happen or it is not and thinking about it is not going to change anything.

For example, you may be worrying about completely the wrong thing, because before you ever get on the plane, there's far more chance that you will be involved in a car accident that will prevent you going on your trip in any event. Of course, this is morbid thinking but it serves to illustrate the point that there really is no sense in worrying about something that might never happen.

When you are on the plane, cruising at 30,000 feet, it is a fact that there is absolutely nothing you can do to change your situation. So, make sure that you get a window seat, and be amazed at the view (assuming that are not flying at night). Your grandparents (or perhaps your great-grandparents) never, ever got to see such an unbelievable panoramic vista of the world, they never got to see such incredible beauty, so be grateful instead of being scared.

In this way, you teach yourself that instead of being afraid of flying, you should be in awe of or rapt by the wonder of modern day, super-safe flying.

Don't dwell on your mistakes. You are going to get a chance to make good on your errors at a later date because that later date will inevitably come. And you should also remember that none of us is



perfect and everyone makes mistakes from time to time because making mistakes is an inevitable feature of the human condition.

Understand that whilst you are 100% in the care of someone else, they are the most capable people imaginable for the job that they are doing. And despite this fact, you are not completely helpless. You can deal with the psychological and physical side-effects of fear of flying by learning and practicing deep breathing exercises, progressive relaxation and so on.

Discipline yourself to do these things whenever the fear of flying starts to set in again by making sure that these skills or abilities become a part of your regular flying routine. One way of doing this that will work for almost anyone who suffers from a fear of flying will be highlighted in the next chapter.

As for thinking about all of the things that could go wrong, you have to be realistic and grown up about the situation. For instance, whilst you might allow yourself to think dark thoughts before getting on the plane, once you are on-board, you should see view the whole thing as a challenge, a fight from which you are not going to run away.

Accept that whilst there are a multitude of bad things that could happen, the chances of any of these things happening are absolutely minutely tiny, so what is the point of worrying about something that is almost certainly never going to happen?

Teach yourself these thought patterns and it will help to banish all of the negative thoughts that between them make up the fear of flying.

### **The natural negative element...**

One thing that differentiates flying from most other forms of public transport is that most people do not fly without a good reason to do so. Whilst you might for example hop on the subway to go down town to see what is happening, you almost always have a concrete reason for flying.

Sometimes, the reason that you're flying is positive or happy, but this is not always the case. If for example you and the family are jetting off on vacation, you have a completely positive situation which probably means that your emotions and feelings are also completely positive.

However, most of us have suffered situations where the scenario was very different, where we have had to fly for a reason that was not especially positive or upbeat. For instance, there can be very few people who have not had to take a flight that was not in some way associated with family illness or even bereavement.

In this type of scenario, you are obviously going to feel a little downbeat and negative. You are suffering unpleasant emotions such as hurt or uncertainty and because flying has a psychologically negative side to it, it is easy for those negative emotions to be transferred or attached to the flying process itself. In effect, your emotions are already 'dangerous', so you transfer those negative emotions to flying.

If you have a fear of flying, it is probably not something that started before you went on your very first flight. Although the majority of people will probably feel a little nervous about flying for the very first time, these feelings usually pass when you see that flying is not really all that different to travelling on a bus or on the subway.

For anyone who has a more persistent fear of flying, there has probably been a previous flying experience when that fear first exhibited itself (sometimes with but usually without a specific reason). This may not necessarily be associated with a bad experience in flight because it might be more associated with the negative reason for which that flight was being taken.

What you need to do in this situation is trace the reasons for your fear of flying. If you can trace what caused this fear in the first place, then you will be able to do something about it, so start by isolating when you first started to feel your fear of flying.

Next, analyze such factors as why you were flying, and what happened before, during and after the flight. Try to recall as much detail as you can, and write it all down as this may be the key to why flight is so scary for you.

At the same time, analyze what was happening elsewhere in your life as well because this too might have been a psychological trigger for the fear that you feel right now. For instance, did anything happen or did anyone do anything that left you feeling emotionally hurt or disturbed? Did it or they make you feel conflicted or angry before, during or immediately after you took your flight?

If there is a positive answer to any of these questions, it may well be that you are transferring negative thoughts or feelings from a completely nonrelated situation to flying.

It will certainly help you if you can trace the root cause of your fear of flying, especially if the main cause has got nothing whatsoever to do with getting on a plane. In any situation where you can trace the exact cause of a fear or a phobia, it makes it considerably easier to tackle that situation the next time you get on an airplane because if you know what 'the enemy' is, it is far easier to fight it successfully, whereas it is much harder if you don't.

### **If you are flying with children...**

The majority of children do not have a natural fear of flying, so unless your child has previously been involved in a flying situation that was traumatic or scary, it is likely that there is some other underlying reason if your child is scared of flying.

Sometimes, children will have exactly the same scenario in their life as highlighted in the previous section of this report. Something bad happens in their life and they transferred the negative feelings about whatever it was that happened to flying.

For instance, in a modern world where divorce is becoming increasingly common, it is not especially unusual for children to have to fly from one estranged parent to visit the other. In this scenario, it is fairly obvious that the child involved will have mixed or negative emotions and not unnaturally, these negative emotions could very easily be transferred to the process of flying itself.

It is also a fact that children are often very well tuned to their parents emotions and feelings, so if you feel somehow upset or concerned about flying, it is quite likely that your children will feel exactly the same as a reflection of your psychological mien.

So, if your child starts to exhibit signs of being scared of flying, consider whether there is anything in the surrounding psychological situation that could be causing them to feel this way.

## Try to control your emotions...

There are many ways of learning to control your emotions, but two particular methods of emotional control that work extremely well for many people are deep breathing and progressive relaxation.

### **Learning to breathe deeply the easy way**

You may have heard of the famous Russian physicist [Ivan Pavlov](#) and his experiment with dogs where he proved that reflex actions were not necessarily uncontrollable. This is an idea that can be applied to your thoughts as well by associating them with deep breathing so that breathing deeply becomes a conditioned reflex that is triggered every time your fear of flying kicks in.

When Pavlov carry out his experiment, the concept was that he rang a bell before giving his dogs food. After doing this for some considerable time, he discovered that as soon as he rang the bell, the dogs began to salivate and their digestive processes kicked in. In effect, the experiment carried out by Pavlov proved that involuntary reflexes could be triggered on demand as a result of conditioning and training. There is no reason why the same thinking cannot be applied to people and your fear of flying.

You can read about this particular [deep breathing training training in detail here](#) but in a nutshell, the idea is that you train yourself so that as soon as your fear of flying starts, you have already conditioned yourself to start breathing slowly and deeply as a natural reflex reaction.

In essence therefore, by adopting this particular deep breathing training technique, you ensure that you start taking counter-action as soon as your fear starts to take over and, more importantly, you do so immediately and automatically.

This is obviously not something that you can train yourself to do immediately but with a little time plus a reasonable degree of concentration and effort, you should be able to master this technique in a matter of a few weeks. And once you have done so, you have acquired a perfect way of dealing with your fear of flying any time it seems as if it is likely to hit you.

The beauty of this approach is that once you train your reflexes, you remove the requirement for conscious thoughts that tell you when to start breathing deeply. This is very important because you already know that your fear of flying is anything but rational, so having to use conscious thinking to remind yourself to stop breathing deeply might be a little difficult.

When you are suffering fear induced anxiety or panic attacks, the last thing you have is the capability for rational conscious thought so conditioning your reflexes to act automatically in this way is extremely effective.

### **Progressive relaxation**

[Progressive relaxation](#) is a technique for stress management that was developed by [Edmund Jacobson](#) in the 1920's. Jacobson argued that since anxiety was often accompanied by tense muscles, it could be reduced or removed by learning how to relax.

The basic idea of progressive relaxation is that you learn to tense and then relax muscles throughout your body and that by doing this, you also learn how tensed and relax muscles feel. This is a very simple technique for relaxing yourself, takes around five minutes and can be done anywhere, any time. As suggested, relaxing means that you reduce anxiety and tension in your body, which means that by adopting this relaxation strategy, you automatically lessen your fear of flying.

If you are at home, sit or lie down, or if you are actually on the plane and in the air when you start to feel the fear creeping up on you, make sure that you are sat in your seat.

Once you are comfortable, start the program by tensing all of the muscles in your head and face. Scrunch your face up in a grimace or frown, grit your teeth together, close your eyes as tightly as possible and if you can do it, wiggle your ears up and down. Breathe in whilst doing all this and hold it for ten seconds.

Now, let the air out and relax, let every muscle go as lax as possible, almost as if you are asleep. You should feel the tension draining from your face so enjoy the feeling before moving on to doing the same with your neck and shoulders.

This is why it's called progressive relaxation, because you move on from one area of your body to the next. After your neck and shoulders, move on to your chest, then your abdomen, right arm from the top to the ends of your fingers, your left arm and so on.

With practice, it is said that this process can become like 'liquid relaxation, with the idea being that the tension drain is like something that is poured on the top of your head that then flows down your body.

And if you are in a hurry or need to feel the results quickly, there is a four step version of this program where you focus only on your face followed by your shoulders, neck and arms. After that, it is your chest and abdomen with your focus finally switching to your buttocks, legs and feet.

With either the full version or the abridged progressive relaxation program, you are able to relax and by doing so, reduce your fear or anxiety levels.

### **Taking the bull by the horns**

There are millions of people who are apprehensive about flying although the majority manage to get over it pretty quickly. But the point that you have to grasp is that if you suffer from a fear of flying is that you are really the only person who can get you over or past where you are now, although in a genuine worst case scenario, you could always consult a mental health care professional like a psychologist.

But it is easier and quicker if you learn to control your emotions through your own efforts, mainly because by doing so, you will have the capability of keeping a lid on things on command, something that you can call on at any time.

Deep breathing or progressive relaxation will both help you relax and used in combination, they make a very strong antidote to all forms of anxiety, fear or stress. There is therefore no reason why you should not start practicing them right away.

## Feeling bad in the air

There are many people who suffer motion sickness of one form or another, with one of the most common forms being [airsickness](#). This is a condition that is most commonly suffered by women and younger children, although it is one that can be suffered by anyone.

All forms of motion sickness happen because there is a lack of balance between the information being fed to the brain by the three parts of the human body where motion is sensed being the eyes, the inner ear and the body. In the labyrinth or inner ear, motion sickness has an adverse effect on your normal sense of equilibrium and balance hence your spatial orientation is also adversely affected:

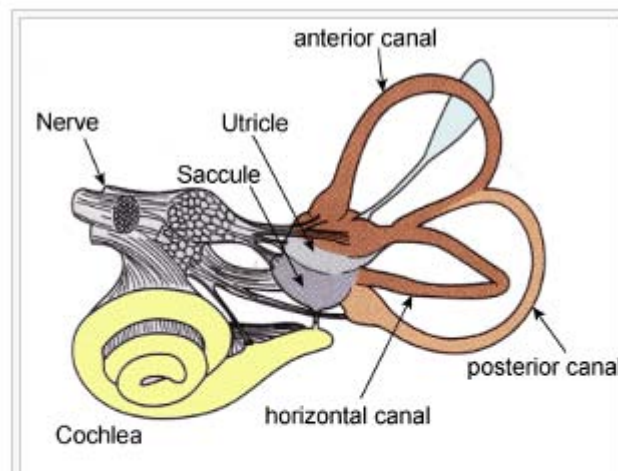


Figure 1 The labyrinth of the inner ear, from the left ear. It contains i) the cochlea (yellow), which is the peripheral organ of our auditory system; ii) the semicircular canals (brown), which transduce rotational movements; and iii) the otolithic organs (in the blue/purple pouches), which transduce linear accelerations. The light blue pouch is the endolymphatic sac, and contains only fluid.

As an example, when your motion is voluntary (if you are walking or running for instance) the messages being sent to your brain by all three points of reference tie together as what your eye is seeing and your body and vestibular system (the inner ear) are feeling are all in agreement with one another.

However, when the motion is involuntary such as when you are in a plane going through an area of turbulence or on a ship that is rolling in heavy seas, what your eyes are telling your brain and what you are feeling are in direct conflict with one another.

It is believed or hypothesized that this conflict is a major cause of motion sickness although it should be noted that because of the complexity of motion sickness, this is only a hypothesis. It is however a hypothesis that is generally supported and believed by the majority of the medical profession because tests have indicated that this is most likely to be the cause of motion sickness.

One interesting fact is that in animals that do not have a vestibular system or people whose vestibular system is damaged, motion sickness never occurs. This suggests that it is the inner ear that is most critical in deciding whether airsickness will develop whilst the information sent to the brain from the eyes and the deeper tissues of the bodily surface do not seem to be as important. This theory is supported by the fact that blind people are not immune to suffering motion sickness.

All forms of motion sickness are more likely to occur when complex involuntary movements are involved, with both horizontal and vertical movement together being far more likely to cause airsickness than one or the other on their own. The kind of turbulence that is most often experienced in a plane generally involves up-and-down as well side to side movement, hence the susceptibility of many people to air sickness in turbulent conditions.

In this situation, you can certainly feel the motion it through the seat of your pants and your inner ear senses it too yet all you see is the inside of the plane which looks exactly the same as it did when you first boarded. Consequently, there is spatial confusion, a mismatch between what you see and feel, hence you feel sick.

Although the exact causes of the airsickness are not fully understood, it is generally believed that the imbalance between the messages being sent to the brain from various different parts of the body causes problems with various different neurotransmitters. These are naturally produced chemicals that enable the transmission of 'signals' throughout the brain and nervous system.

It is believed that an imbalance of neurotransmitters like histamine and norepinephrine is the most likely cause of motion sickness, hence the fact that many medicines that 'treat' motion sickness contain these particular neurotransmitters which you take in an effort to restore neurotransmitter balance.

The most common symptoms of suffering air sickness are nausea which often leads to vomiting, loss of appetite, cold sweats and pallid skin, lack of concentration, vertigo, headache and increased tiredness.



All in all, as anyone who has ever suffered the misery of motion sickness will tell you, it is no bundle of laughs and something that you definitely want to get over as quickly and effectively as possible.

The good news is that for most people, airsickness is not a serious condition whilst it is one that is likely to cease affecting you once the motion that causes it ceases as well. However, that is not always true, as some people do continue to suffer motion sickness symptoms for several hours or perhaps even a few days after the situation which originally induced their sickness has ceased.

### **Medicinal treatments for airsickness**

The first thing to say is that most experts believe that it is probably impossible to completely remove the possibility of suffering airsickness 100% totally without surgically modifying the inner ear (which has proved to be an effective motion sickness cure in monkeys).

Assuming however that most people would not want to go to such radical lengths to get rid of a motion sickness problem, it is likely that you will look elsewhere for suitable airsickness treatments, knowing that they will not always work in every situation.

There are quite a few over-the-counter medical treatments for air sickness almost all of which should be taken or used at least a few hours before flying.

Some of these are antihistamines such as [meclizine](#) (Bonine, Antivert and Postafen being three very common brands), [diphenhydramine](#) (Benadryl or Dimedrol outside the USA and Canada) and belladonna in the form of [scopolamine](#).

### **Side effects of drugs for airsickness**

Looking at each of these drugs in turn, they all have some potential adverse side-effects of which you should be aware.

Meclizine is a known antiemetic (anti-nausea) and antispasmodic (it prevents muscle spasms) medicine that can be bought over-the-counter in most pharmacies and drugstores. It is believed that meclizine helps to reduce the likely susceptibility to nausea and vomiting by reducing activity in the part of the brain which controls nausea. It also helps prevent all forms of motion sickness by slowing down the activity of the neurons in the vestibular area of the brain as well.

The main side effect of taking this drug is that it generally causes drowsiness, which whilst it might not be a bad thing while you are flying can be a problem if you land and need to drive. Furthermore, it can sometimes cause the very nausea that it is supposed to prevent whilst also leading to an unnaturally dry mouth, blurred vision, constipation

and excess water retention. In a very small minority of cases, meclizine has also be seen to be at least partially responsible for hypotension (low blood pressure) and heart palpitations.

Benadryl is used as an antihistamine, antiemetic, hypnotic and sedative drug. This drug is in fact one of the oldest known antihistamines, having been discovered in 1943, but it is still readily used and prescribed (although it can be bought over the counter) in many countries of the world.

Once again, the most common side-effect of taking diphenhydramine is profound rowdiness, sometimes accompanied by [ataxia](#), dry throat and mouth, flushed skin, irregular or rapid heartbeat, blurred vision, short-term memory loss and constipation. Furthermore, due to its potential for an inter-reaction with other medications, using Benadryl when you are taking other drugs could have potentially harmful or hazardous side-effects.

A significant overdose of diphenhydramine could potentially lead to a heart attack, coma and death too, so despite its apparently benign nature, this is not a drug to toy with.

If this is the case with diphenhydramine, the same is even more true of scopolamine which given that it is related to belladonna should be no surprise. Scopolamine is a drug that has valid medical uses only in extremely tiny doses, as an overdose can cause delusions, deliriums, stupor and death!

It is an [anticholinergic drug](#) that prevents motion sickness by blocking the neurotransmitter [acetylcholine](#) in both the peripheral and central nervous system. As suggested previously, it is believed that motion sickness is caused by some form of upset balance between various different neurotransmitters and using scopolamine is believed to redress the balance, thereby reducing the susceptibility to airsickness.

Although this is a drug that can be taken orally, it is most commonly used in the form of an infused patch that will usually contain as little as 330 µg (micrograms) of the drug. This is affixed to the skin – usually behind the ear – around 3-4 hours before flying so that the drug can be released by the patch to be gradually absorbed through the skin.

As suggested, in an overdose situation, scopolamine can be very dangerous indeed, but as it is almost impossible to overdose if you are using transdermal patches (which is the most common form of usage in the West), this is not likely to be a problem for most people.

However, because of its anticholinergic qualities, scopolamine can cause a dry mouth, throat and nose or in more severe cases, impaired vision,

sensitivity to light, constipation, problems urinating and rapid heartbeat or [tachycardia](#).

### **It's your choice...**

As suggested, most of the common over-the-counter medical products designed to deal with airsickness do have potentially unpleasant or even dangerous side-effects. Hence, you need to carefully weigh up the possibility of suffering these side effects before deciding whether taking drugs to calm your airsickness is for you or not.

Before doing so, it makes sense to consider the things that you can do to reduce the chances of suffering airsickness without resorting to chemical-based pharmaceutical drugs.

### **Tips for avoiding airsickness...**

There are plenty of things that you can do that will help to reduce the chances that you are going to suffer airsickness the next time you fly. However, it is important to note that whilst a few of these tips and ideas only become 'operational' after you board the plane, others need some forward planning.

For example, for two or three days before the flight, avoid eating and drinking the wrong things, and try to avoid overindulging as well. Do not eat very spicy, heavy or overly-fatty foods or foods that you know from past experience do not agree with you. Don't drink too much alcohol either because you can guarantee that suffering a raging hangover whilst flying is not going to help with trying to avoid airsickness.

And of course, when you are actually flying (especially if you're flying long-distance and will therefore be on the plane for several meals) the same rules should apply.

Avoid spicy foods, foods that are too fatty and don't fall for the temptation of eating everything that is placed in front of you because of boredom. Do so and you are likely to feel overfull and bloated which again is not likely to make you feel a great deal better.

In fact, on shorter journeys, it is best to eat nothing at all if possible, although eating small amounts of dried foodstuffs like biscuits or crackers might help as they do tend to dry your mouth out. Whilst on the flight, try to avoid dairy produce (because of the protein and fat content) as well as vegetables and fruits because they may make your stomach unnecessarily acid.

Some studies have indicated that foods which contain too much salt may exacerbate airsickness as does food which is too rich in vitamin B1 such as pork, beef, eggs and fish. It also appears that if your levels of

vitamins A and C plus iron are too low, this might make you more prone to airsickness as well (especially women).

Also, don't fall prey to drinking too much just because it does not cost you anything to do so. Whilst there might not be a cost in monetary terms, there could certainly be a cost in terms of sickness if you overindulge.

Even foods that you know are likely to have a strong smell should probably be avoided whilst in-flight because a strong smell is often enough to turn your stomach queasy. Do not wear strong cologne or perfume for the same reason and if you are travelling with a companion, ask them not to refrain as well if possible.

When you are booking your ticket or checking in, try to choose a seat where there is likely to be the least motion. Generally speaking, this will be the middle of the plane in the area of the wings, so if you can get a seat here, it is likely to offer the least disturbed ride.

Also, if you are flying during daylight hours, it can sometimes help to have a window seat as well. By doing so, you have the ability to focus on the horizon out of the window which might help by minimizing your spatial disorientation.

Avoid reading on the flight if you are prone to airsickness because as anyone who has ever suffered motion sickness will tell you, having your eyes fixed on a book a few inches away will only exacerbate the mismatch between what your eyes are seeing and what your body and inner ear are feeling. Hence, if you read, you are almost certainly going to feel worse than you will if you keep your eyes fixed on the horizon outside the plane.

On most planes, there will be an air vent above your head so make sure you use it. Having a flow of air on your face and head will help to keep you cool and refreshed to at least a certain degree. Whilst the air flow is certainly not likely to be sea-breeze fresh, it can help mitigate the stuffiness and often unpleasantly warm atmosphere on-board.

Try to keep away from others who are suffering airsickness if possible as hearing others chatting about their sickness problems or even worse, seeing someone being sick is certainly not going to help you feel any better.

### **Homoeopathic treatments for airsickness**

There are various homoeopathic treatments for motion sickness that you might consider using as an alternative to the medical drugs highlighted earlier.

The most common of these homoeopathic treatments are as follows:

**Cocculus Indicus:** This is probably the most common homoeopathic remedy for motion sickness, especially for sufferers who experience nausea which gets worse when they see or smell food. It is common for Cocculus to be given to travelers who commonly feel weak and experience a hollow or empty feeling in their stomach as a result of suffering airsickness. This is a remedy that is also very well suited to people whose condition is made worse by feeling cold, from moving about or from a lack of sleep.

**Rhus Toxicodendron:** Is probably better known by the more common name [poison ivy](#) but fortunately, in very small doses, it is not going to kill you! However, what it can do for anyone whose airsickness usually exhibits itself through nausea and vomiting (whilst there is also a lack of appetite at the same time) is help calm their condition down.

Often people who suffer these kinds of symptoms will feel weak and lightheaded because there is a distinct lack of nutrition inside them, so they might feel dizzy when standing. Sometime this feeling will be accompanied by an intense headache at the front of the head and your scalp might feel painfully sensitive to the touch as well.

**Tabacum:** This solution would be a suitable homoeopathic remedy for anyone whose airsickness is most commonly identified by them feeling nauseous and faint, with a green tinge or extremely pale color to their skin. Most commonly, these obvious symptoms would be accompanied by a sinking feeling in the pit of the stomach and possibly a severe headache that feels as if there is a very tight band wrapped around the head.

**A combination:** Sometimes, a homeopath is more likely to recommend a combination of several homoeopathic remedies rather than just one, mainly because people's airsickness does not fit any of the specific category descriptions precisely. A relatively common combination would for example be a mixture of Cocculus Indicus, Tabacum and Petroleum, although if your homoeopath chooses to recommend only one substance to deal with airsickness, it is likely to be Cocculus.

### **Herbs for airsickness**

Many studies have indicated that ginger appears to be more effective than a placebo in reducing the adverse effects of motion sickness. For example, in one study, a group who were given ginger extract reported significant reduction in nausea, vomiting and cold sweating when compared with the control group who were taking a placebo.

However, other studies have indicated that ginger may not be as effective as some experts suggest, so further study is obviously necessary.

Nevertheless, of the herbal remedies that have been put forward for dealing with airsickness, there is some evidence that ginger is the most effective, and therefore dosing yourself up with ginger capsules before and during your flight might help to reduce the severity of your problem if it does not get rid of it completely.

A combination of [peppermint](#) and [black horehound](#) has been used by some herbalists as an effective method of treating nausea, so whilst it is not specifically used as a treatment for motion sickness, it can certainly offset some of the worst effects of being sick on the plane.

### **Acupuncture and acupressure**

Several studies have indicated that both acupressure and acupuncture can help to reduce the nausea and vomiting that is usually associated with air sickness.

Obviously, if acupuncture is the way you want to deal with your problem, you would do so before flying, whereas using an [acupressure band](#) is something that you can do throughout your flight. For this reason, it makes considerably more sense to consider using an acupressure band than it does to resort to more traditional acupuncture particularly as there seems to be little or no difference between the two in terms of effectiveness.

The acupressure band works by putting pressure on the acupuncture point known as the Pericardium 6 which is usually the one that is most commonly associated with nausea. This acupuncture point is located on the inside of the wrist, approximately half an inch to one inch above the central crease on your wrist. Thus, by applying pressure to this particular point on your wrist, the acupressure band can significantly reduce the level of nausea that you feel every time you fly.

### **Breathing and relaxing works again...**

In the same way that learning deep breathing techniques can help people overcome their fear of flying, studies indicate that people who suffer airsickness might significantly reduce the chances of doing so by forcing themselves to breathe deeply and slowly whilst sat in their seat.

Similarly, practicing progressive relaxation can be a big help too, not least because of the fact that for most people who suffer from airsickness, their problem is that least as much a psychological one as it is a physical condition.

As anyone who has ever suffered regular motion sickness will tell you, they almost always think themselves into a situation where they suffer because as soon as they get on the plane, they can think of nothing else but being sick. Consequently, it quickly becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, meaning that if you recognize yourself in this situation, you

have to do something to break the cycle of mentally making yourself sick.

Focusing your thoughts on breathing deeply or on carrying out a program of deep progressive relaxation will take your mind off your susceptibility to airsickness. Thus, even if it does little for you physically, just the fact that it allows you to think about something other than being ill could be enough to help you overcome your problem.

## Jetlag and how to beat it...

When travelling across several time zones because of flying east to west or west to east, you disturb what are known as your [circadian rhythms](#), the natural cycle or rhythm of your life across every 24 hour day. Consequently, people who travel across several time zones in this way suffer what is known as a [circadian rhythm sleep disorder](#), more commonly known as jetlag.

In very simple terms, suffering jetlag means that your body wants to sleep when it is the middle of the day in the place to which you have travelled, whilst you conversely feel wide-awake and full of vim in the middle of the night. Suffering from jetlag is a disconcerting and debilitating condition, one that generally takes a few days to get over, with the recovery period usually dependent upon the number of times zones which you have crossed.

As a general guideline, it is suggested that most people's recovery rate will be one day for every time zone traversed in an easterly fashion, or one and a half days for every time zone crossed in the opposite direction.

In addition, there is [some evidence](#) that travelling west to east will cause more of a jetlag problem than going in the opposite direction with several possible reasons being put forward as to why this should be.

Firstly, most people have a circadian rhythm that does not exactly tie in with the 24-hour clock which is why it is generally far easier to stay up later at night than it is to get up earlier in the morning.

There is also some evidence that taking a flight going east is more likely to require you to stay up more than one full night in order to make the necessary adjustments to the local time zone.

Consider this comparison of going east to west and vice versa to get a clearer idea of why this might be the case:



- Westward from London to Los Angeles, VIA BA0279, Jan 29, 2008. Time zone difference 8 hours.

<b>Westward</b>	<b>Biological clock</b>	<b>Los Angeles local time</b>
Departure	JAN 29 - 10:05	JAN 29 - 02:05
Arrival	JAN 29 - 21:10	JAN 29 - 13:10
Bedtime	JAN 30 - 06:00	JAN 29 - 22:00

- Eastward from Los Angeles to London, VIA BA0278, Jan 29, 2008.

<b>Eastward</b>	<b>Biological clock</b>	<b>London local time</b>
Departure	JAN 29 - 15:59	JAN 29 - 23:59
Arrival	JAN 30 - 02:05	JAN 30 - 10:05
Bedtime	JAN 30 - 14:00	JAN 30 - 22:00

In the first of these two scenarios, you have a situation which is equivalent to staying up throughout the night before finally going to bed at what would be 6 a.m. according to your biological clock. In effect therefore, you're going to bed around nine hours later than normal.

However, in the second example, your biological time when you go to bed will be around 2 p.m. after staying up all night, which means that you 14 hours later going to bed than normal.

The symptoms of jetlag vary from individual to individual, as does the severity of the problem. However, some or all of these 'symptoms' could be expected in an individual who is suffering from jet lag:

- Disorientation, inability to concentrate and general mental 'fuzziness'.
- Becoming unreasonable or irrational far more easily. Once you have suffered through a long flight, the last thing you need to do is fight your way through customs and immigration to then have to find the train station or a taxi to get to your hotel.
- Disturbed and broken sleep. This often serves to increase your irritability and unreasonableness.
- General ennui and fatigue that makes it very difficult to achieve anything meaningful.
- Dehydration that can often cause headaches and make you more susceptible to minor medical problems like colds, flu and other infections.

- Your limbs sometime swell in flight so you might have sore legs or feet.
- Travelling to a distant country can often bring on other minor medical problems like upset stomach or diarrhea, often associated with a change of food and water as well as spending many hours on the plane.

There is no doubt that even seasoned travelers can find it difficult to come to terms with suffering jetlag. Nevertheless, there are quite a few things that you can do in order to minimize the adverse effects that you feel.

### **Before you fly...**

- If you have been feeling a bit under the weather anyway, you should consult your doctor and tell him or her that you are planning to fly. The doctor may have something that they can give you to improve your condition or they may have recommendations about how you can do so.
- If you have had trouble with your ears on previous flights, most commonly not being able to 'pop' them when the pressure is changing because the plane is taking off or descending, you might want to get a decongestant that you can use to help relieve this problem on your next flight. Alternatively, many people suck boiled sweets for the same reason, with mints being the most commonly favored choice.
- Try to get plenty of rest in the days leading up to your trip and plan everything well ahead too. Leaving everything to the last minute is a recipe for stress and tension and that is not going to help you enjoy the flight or recover from it as quickly as you should.
- Plan to wear loose, comfortable clothing whilst flying because wearing tight clothing in a cramped environment such as an airline cabin is going to increase your discomfort and stress levels.
- On the day you are flying, avoid drinking too many caffeine laden drinks such as coffee as caffeine increases the risk of being dehydrated. Drink plenty of water on the day you fly instead of your normal coffee or tea.
- [The Argonne Diet](#) is a diet plan that is specially formulated to help offset the worst effects of jetlag, and for a small fee (\$10.95), you can have a completely [personalized anti-jetlag diet](#) plan calculated for you.

- [No Jet Lag](#) is a popular homoeopathic remedy for jetlag that can be bought pretty much all over the world that many people swear by:

## WHERE TO BUY NO JET LAG

Each packet of No-Jet-Lag® contains 32 tablets – usually enough for 50 hours flying - equivalent to a round-the-world trip for one person.

Because there's usually an extra charge for postage and handling...plan ahead. Single order enough No-Jet-Lag to cover all your travel needs for today...and tomorrow! Sealed in foil, each tablet remains effective for years to come. .

[United States](#)

[Hong Kong](#)

[Canada](#)

[Singapore](#)

[Europe](#)

[Australia](#)

[South Africa](#)

[New Zealand](#)

### UNITED STATES

No-Jet-Lag® is available at Natural Food Stores, Luggage and Travel Accessory stores, and Independent Pharmacies.

Available at all [REI](#) and [Wild Oats Markets](#) and many [Whole Foods Markets](#).

### During the flight...

- Make sure that you drink plenty of water whilst flying – at least 8 – 12 fluid ounces every hour, preferably mineral water or some other higher quality water that you brought with you yourself rather than the water that is served on the plane (although if this is all that is available, it is better than nothing).
- Avoid coffee and alcohol on the plane, as both are diuretics and they can therefore cause you a dehydration problem. This will make you feel considerably worse whilst on the plane and probably also exacerbate your jetlag problem as well.
- Use lotion to avoid dehydration of your skin.

- Walk around the cabin reasonably regularly as this stops your body 'stiffening up' and can help to prevent other potential problems that will be highlighted in the next chapter.
- If you are due to arrive at your destination in the morning, try to sleep on the plane. Use a mask, earplugs and an inflatable neck support if these things help to induce a sleepy condition or increase your comfort so that it is more likely that you can sleep.
- If on the other hand you are due to arrive in the evening, try to stay awake on the plane. Keep yourself busy by watching the in-flight movies, listening to music or doing something reasonably active like puzzle solving.
- Avoid taking sleeping tablets, because whilst they will send you to sleep, the sleep that tablets put you into is often a very deep sleep, meaning that you hardly move in what amounts to a chemical induced comatose state. This naturally means that you hardly move whilst sleeping which again can induce other major problems to be highlighted later.
- Set your watch to the time at your destination as soon as your plane takes off because by doing so, you start the process of mentally preparing yourself for arrival.

#### **After you arrive...**

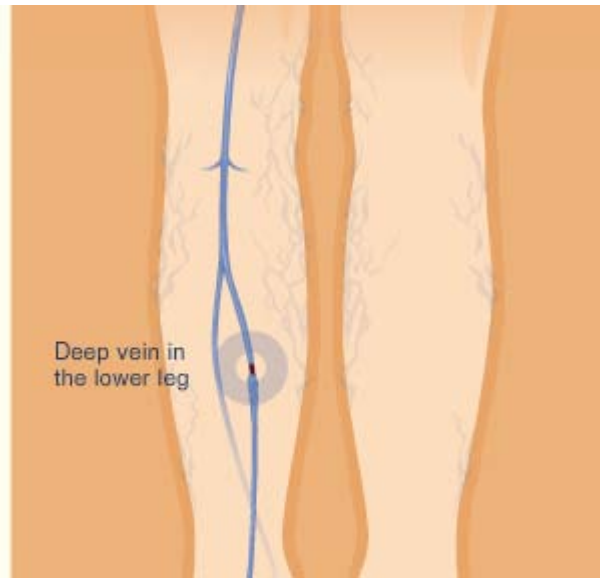
- If at all possible, try not to go to bed until the nighttime after you have arrived. Do this and it really does minimize your jetlag problems, probably the single most effective step for doing so.
- In the arrival airport, use the stairs and walk about as much as possible to get your body moving and back to normality as quickly as possible.
- Your body has a natural electromagnetic system which will have been thrown out of synch by flying. Hence, when you arrive at your destination, try to swim in the ocean (for the salt water), take a warm Epsom salts bath or walk barefoot on the ground in an effort to return your system to its normal state.
- Get outside and go for a walk, especially if you can do so in the sunshine. Both the sunshine and the exercise help to reinvigorate you, meaning that you will feel less tired or jaded. This helps you to get through the day so that you can sleep at night which is a big step towards restoring your circadian rhythms to normality.
- Take a nice long relaxing shower or bath as a way of rehydrating your body, and keep drinking plenty of water. In the first few hours after arriving, it will probably help if you can avoid coffee,

tea and alcohol for exactly the same reasons as highlighted previously.

- Try not to think about the time difference, and forget whatever time it is 'at home'. Irrespective of why you have travelled, this new place is your home for now so try to ignore the time difference, because it is essentially irrelevant to you until you go back.
- Some studies suggest that taking melatonin tablets for three nights after flying just before bed helps to promote quicker recovery from jetlag, although not every expert agrees with this suggestion. Nevertheless, as melatonin is a natural hormone secreted by the pineal gland that is believed to have a direct relationship with your circadian rhythms, there is reason to believe that taking melatonin for this short period of time could help your circadian rhythms to get back to normal. One 0.5 mg tablet every night for the first three days should be enough but do not take the tablet before leaving or during the flight as this is believed to knock your circadian rhythms even further out of synch.

## The dangers of deep vein thrombosis

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a condition where a blood clot forms in a deep vein, most commonly in your thighs and the lower area of your legs:



This happens when blood thickens and clumps together and if a blood clot forms and breaks away, you have a potentially very serious problem. If the blood clot breaks away in this manner, it is known as an embolus which can then move to your lungs so that you suffer a [pulmonary embolism](#).

Alternatively, it can travel to your brain in which case you suffer a stroke so in either situation, you have a very serious medical problem that can be fatal that could be caused by a deep vein thrombosis.

The major cause of deep vein thrombosis is inactivity which leads to a pooling of blood in your legs. The inactivity that caused the blood to collect in your legs also allows it to grow thicker and coagulate which increases the possibility of suffering a DVT.

This is one of the reasons why I recommend that you do not take sleeping pills when on the plane as the deep sleep induced by pills leads to an almost complete lack of movement which can encourage the blood pooling effect.

Fortunately, the answer to DVT is remarkably simple for most people.

Get up and have a walk about the plane every couple of hours or follow one of the major airline exercise programs that are offered by the likes of [United Airlines](#) and most of the other major carriers. [Pilates](#) is

something else that you might consider doing because once again, there are quite a few gentle stretching and bending exercises that will significantly reduce your chances of suffering a deep vein thrombosis.

Of course, you might not believe that you are at risk from DVT, but the fact is, everyone who flies and chooses to stay in their seat throughout the duration of the flight is at risk.

However, if you a female who is currently undergoing hormone replacement therapy or you use oral contraceptives, these may cause your blood to be thicker than normal, which obviously increases the risk of DVT. If therefore you fall into either of these categories, you should talk to your doctor or medical specialist to discuss and analyze the options available to you.

If you are overweight or obese, the chances of suffering a DVT are significantly increased as is the risk if you are aged over 60. If you have recently been treated for cancer or are currently being treated, you have to apply extra care once again because your risks are increased as well.

There are several signs that he might have a deep vein thrombosis, including swelling in your leg or along the 'line' of your vein, pain or tenderness in your leg, or possibly increased heat in a certain part of your leg. All of these might indicate a DVT which you should immediately report to the cabin staff.

Deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolisms need treatment as soon as humanly possible as both are very serious life-threatening conditions. Hence, there is not a moment to lose when it comes to seeking attention. There are usually medical staff available at most major international airports, so you would be wise to take advantage of the services they offer if for any reason you suspect a DVT.

Of course, as with any medical condition, prevention is far more attractive option than curing it, and given that you can reduce the chances of suffering a deep vein thrombosis by a significant margin simply by exercising whilst flying, it is something that you should definitely make a big effort to do.

## Conclusion

Despite the fact that flying is nowadays only marginally more complex or complicated than getting on a bus or the subway, there are far more medical or mental problems attached to flying than there are to any other form of public transport.

But as you have read in this report, all of these conditions can be dealt with or managed and in a totally natural way as well, so there really is no need to tolerate the problems that you may have suffered from in the past any more.

For most people who have got over their fear of flying or have managed to curb their tendency to suffer airsickness, flying becomes a genuine pleasure, something that is both fun and enjoyable. In fact, for people who reach this stage, the flight becomes an interesting and exciting part of their trip, especially if they are jetting off to some exotic location far away for a vacation.

And by following the instructions in this manual about how to avoid or least minimize jet like as well as making sure that you take as much exercise as possible on the plane, you will ensure that you are likely to enjoy it even more when you arrive at your destination.

There really is no need to suffer because flying does not have to be like Mediaeval water torture! All you need to do is follow what you have read in this guide and you too can finally start to enjoy flying, and do so completely naturally as well!