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## Flying Healthy Ayurvedic-ally

Here are a few tips based (some based on ayurveda) to help you stay healthy through travel.

### Altitude Shock

Airplane cabins are pressurized to about 8,000 - 10,000 feet. This can put us in altitude shock. The best way to prepare for altitude:

- ☞ Hydrate - 1-2 days before you fly make sure you hydrate your body.
- ☞ shilajit - an ayurvedic herb that supports your blood's ability to carry oxygen. Why you feel sleepy on an airplane is because when they are pressurizing the cabin it literally sucks the O<sub>2</sub> out of your brain. Another option is brahmi (gotu kola) Dr. Shekhar (my ayurvedic dr.) told me it has similar benefits to shilajit and it is cheaper and stores longer
- ☞ While in the air sip warm water or club soda with lemon throughout the entire flight — I use lemon essential oil when flying so I don't have to worry about contaminated lemon/lime peels. One drop in a cup of water or club soda. Make sure you enter the airplane with at least one full water bottle — preferably two just in case they are slow getting out the beverage cart.

### Health

Ayurvedic tips to keep your immune system functional in an airplane:

- ☞ Nasya oil - every couple hours put a couple drops of herbed ayurvedic nasya oil in your nostrils, or plain sesame oil is helpful too.
- ☞ ashwaganda - an ayurvedic herb that is an adaptogen herb that supports your immunity and your nervous system. This herb also helps with jet lag. I like to make teas from the whole herb powdered.
- ☞ oil massage (abhyanga) - before you fly, shower and slather your skin with herbalized ayurvedic massage oil or sesame oil. This will stimulate your immune system, keep your skin from drying out from the bad air, and put a protective layer on your skin. Bring a small bottle (carry-on is up to 3 oz.) with a carrier oil and some essential oils in it to massage arms, neck face, chest, etc. while in the air.
- ☞ As for airborne pathogens, Dr. Gendreau has a quick tip using your overhead vent that can help: *"Set your ventilation at low or medium," he says. "Then position it so you can draw an imaginary line of current right in front of your head. I put my hands on my lap so I can feel the current — so I know it's properly positioned." Then if something infectious is floating in your personal space, he says, that air from the vent will create enough current to knock it away."*
- ☞ Also for airborne pathogens, I apply an essential oil immunity blend such as legends, on guard, or thieves on my wrists, neck, and under my nose prior to getting on the airplane and every 2 hours while in the air. Having the protective oils on prior to getting exposed greatly increases their efficacy.
- ☞ Also you can stay grounded in an airplane by touching your feet to metal — if there is metal on the seat in front of you, or you sit in a window seat you can sometimes find metal to prop your feet on. This grounding helps reduce inflammation in the body and protect you from EMFs.

### Noise

Noisy airplane engines exceed levels that are safe for our ears -- especially if you sit in the back of the plane. When you can, try to sit as forward as you can get in the plane.

- ☞ placing a drop of nasya oil (sesame oil with herbs in it — or just plain sesame oil is fine too) in each ear before flying will protect your ears.
- ☞ noise reduction head phones are a nice option too.

### Radiation



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When flying radiation from space is concentrated at the higher altitudes (called cosmic rays). One international flight is as much radiation as a chest x-ray.

- ☞ Iodine - take iodine before flying or make seaweed a regular part of your diet. Iodine prevents your thyroid from taking up radiation.
- ☞ Eat Mushrooms, shiitake or chaga, preferably. Some new studies show some mushrooms can help your body detox radiation. This is only preliminary research, however mushrooms are loaded with beta-glucagon which supports your white blood cells — or your immune system by helping to kill bad bacteria in the body. Certainly no harm (or side effects) in eating mushrooms!
- ☞ Fly at night whenever possible, this greatly reduces how much radiation you are exposed to while above the clouds.

### Circulation and Blood clots

When flying long flights blood circulation gets poor:

- ☞ don't sit like a lady or a gentleman . . . sit like a yogi. When seated in an airplane move about as much as you can -- sit with your legs underneath you, in lotus, half lotus, etc.
- ☞ get up and walk around as much as you can.
- ☞ Triphala - the most common ayurvedic herb - it helps to reduce swelling. Make a tea with the powdered herb and bring some tea bags of it along.
- ☞ Eat chocolate! It helps increase blood flow and improves circulation when flying.
- ☞ Also sources of pycnogenol (a pine bark extract rich in plant compounds called: **proanthocyanidins**) are protective when flying. If you have circulation issues make sure you bring along: apples, chocolate, cinnamon, grapes, pecans — and there are more foods you can look up that are rich in these compounds. Pycnogenol and its proanthocyanidins help prevent deep vein thrombosis and swollen ankles, and they also boost your immune system.

### Food . . .

The best airport food is miso soup and a vegetarian sushi roll. And the good news is most airports have Japanese restaurants :)

- ☞ The miso is probiotic which boosts your immune system, miso also is made from seaweed as is the sushi roll which helps protect your thyroid from taking up radiation.

When above the clouds I pack a cooked vegetable wrap to eat, or take nuts and seeds and chocolate. An avocado is a great travel food too.

Touch as little as possible! When in airports try to find bathrooms without doors!

Airports (so far) that have yoga rooms (as of 2016 when I originally wrote this):

Typically, airport yoga rooms have loaner mats with quiet music or nature sounds playing in the background, as well as posted reminders to take off your shoes and turn off your cell phone. You'll find these peaceful oases to practice in:

- [San Francisco International](#) (one at Gate 60 in Terminal 3, another in the walkway joining Terminals 1 and 2)
- [Burlington International](#) (on the second floor)
- [Chicago Midway](#) (on Concourse C)
- [Chicago O'Hare](#) (in Terminal 3)
- [Dallas/Fort Worth](#) (at Gate D40, between terminals B and D)
- [Heathrow](#) (for SkyTeam members, though anyone can buy a day pass)
- [Helsinki Vantaa](#) (yoga mats are available in the Kainuu quiet lounge)



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## **IN FLIGHT YOGA? This little routine is by an Iyengar teacher:**

The 'Yoga in the Sky' guide was created by travel website Expedia.co.uk, which enlisted chartered physiotherapist and certified yoga teacher Dr Christopher Norris and experts from Iyengar Yoga Deutschland.

'The benefits of practising in-flight yoga are extensive,' Dr Norris said.

He continued: 'Not only will it allow your body and mind the opportunity to relax, it can improve balance, correct posture and even release positive endorphins to make flying as comfortable and enjoyable as possible.'

Experts also advise moving around, raising the heels and walking every half an hour on a plane, to prevent a blood clot forming in the leg, known as a deep vein thrombosis.

From the marichyasana III, which increases flexibility of the spine, to the uttanasana, which stimulates circulation and refreshes the mind, learn how to practice each move by following the guide below...

# 1 URDHVA HASTASANA

## Seated upward stretching exercise

- Feet parallel and legs apart in line with hips
- Pelvis and chest straight
- As you breathe in, stretch your arms up above your head, pulling the sides of your body upwards
- Keep head facing forward between upper arms
- After 5 breaths, lower arms again as you breathe out
- Maintain upright posture

**This encourages shoulder flexibility and stimulates your spine.**



The Urdhva Hastasana pose - in which the arms are stretched into the air for five breaths - encourage shoulder flexibility and stimulates the spine

## 2 URDHVA BADDHANGULIYASANA

### Upward stretching exercise with fingers interlocked

- Feet parallel and legs apart in line with hips
- Pelvis and chest straight
- Stretch your arms out in front of you and interlock your fingers
- Turn your hands so that your palms face forward with thumbs touching
- As you breathe in, stretch your arms up above your head
- After 5 breaths, stretch your arms out in front of you as you breathe out. Switch hands and interlock fingers again

**This improves the torso's ability to stretch.**



The Urdhva Baddahanguliyasana - in which the fingers are interlocked and stretched above the head for five breaths - improves the torso's ability to stretch

## 3 BADDHA HASTASANA

Crossing arms behind the back



- Feet parallel and legs apart in line with hips
- Pelvis and chest straight
- Clasp your elbows behind your back
- After 5 breaths, release your elbows and switch arms
- Maintain upright posture

**This improves flexibility of the joints in your arms.**

**The Baddha Hastana - in which the elbows are clasped behind the back - improves flexibility in the arm joints**

## 4 BHARADVAJASANA I

### Twisting exercise whilst seated



- Feet parallel and legs apart in line with hips
- Pelvis and chest straight
- Stretch your left arm up as you breathe in, rotate to the right as you breathe out
- Place left hand on right thigh whilst pushing against the back of the seat in front with right hand
- Return to original position as you breathe in. As you breathe out, rotate further. Rotate your head last. Keep knees in line.
- As you breathe out, return to the original position. Repeat rotation to the other side

**This stimulates the spine.**

The Bhardavajasana I position - which involves twisting the body while seated - stimulates the spine

## 5 URDHVA BADDHANGULIYASANA IN TADASANA

Stretching arms upwards with fingers interlocked in the mountain pose

- Stand up straight
- Feet parallel and legs apart in line with hips
- Pelvis straight and your chest up
- Position your arms and fingers as in exercise 2.
- Lift your heels and stretch upwards
- After 5 breaths, bring your arms and heels back down
- Maintain upright posture
- Release your fingers and switch hands

**This Improves your sense of balance.**



The Urdhva Baddhanguliyasana In Tadasana - which involves stretching the arms upwards with the fingers interlocked, while raising the heels - improves a person's sense of balance

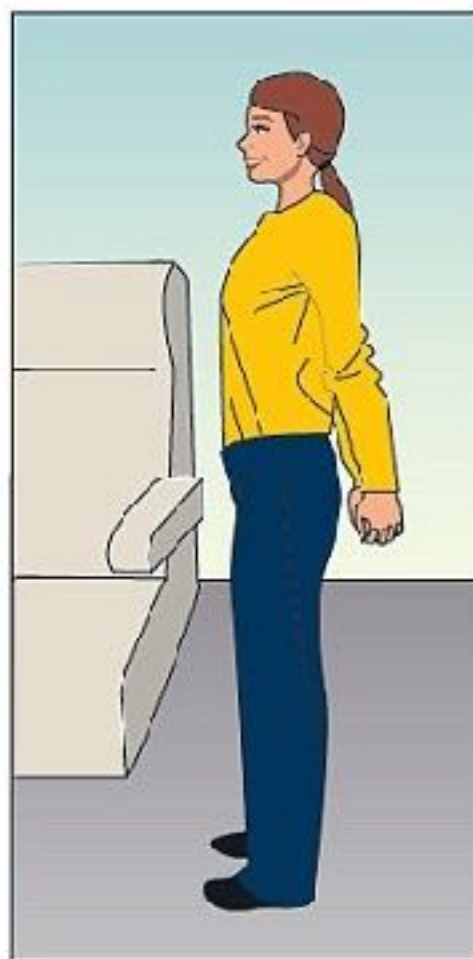


## 6 PASCHIMA BADDHANGU-LIYASANA IN TADASANA

Fingers interlocked behind the back in the mountain pose

- Stand up straight as in exercise 5
- Interlock your fingers behind your back
- Pull your arms and shoulders downwards
- Push your flanks, armpits and sternum upwards at the same time
- After 5 breaths, release your fingers and switch hands

**This helps to relieve tension in the shoulders and neck.**



The Paschima Baddhangu-Liyasana in Tadasana - in which fingers are interlocked behind the arms and shoulders are pulled downwards - helps relieve tension in the shoulders and neck

## 7 GOMUKHASANA IN TADASANA

Hooking fingers behind the back in the mountain pose

- Stand up straight as in exercise 5
- Work your left hand up your back until it is parallel to your spine
- Bring your right hand down from your shoulder blades, hook your fingers
- Pull your elbows away from each other, extending your right armpit
- Switch arms after 5 breaths



**This encourages shoulder flexibility.**

The Gomukhasana In Tadasana - in which the fingers are hooked and the hands interlocked between the shoulder blades - encourages flexibility in the shoulders

## 8 UTTHITA HASTA PADANGUSTHASANA I

Standing exercise with leg bent in front



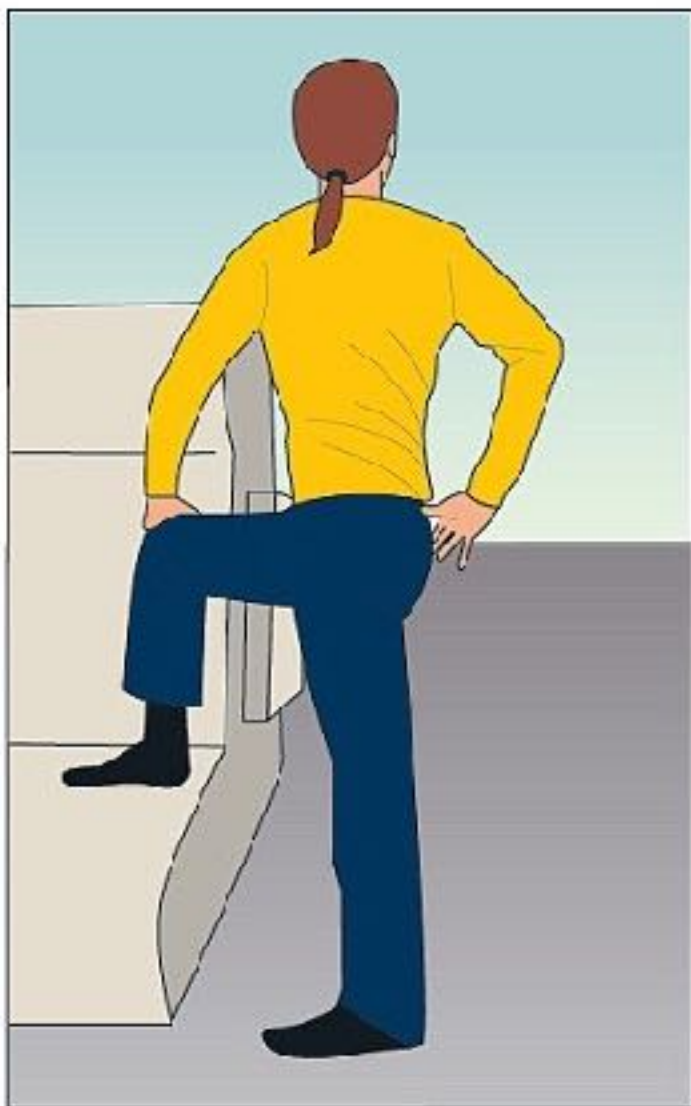
- Stand up straight as in exercise 5
- Place your right foot on the seat, keeping your shin and supporting leg perpendicular
- Keep your hip bones level
- Push your flanks, armpits and sternum upwards at the same time
- After 5 breaths, switch legs

**This encourages flexibility of the hips.**

**The Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana I pose in which the leg is raised on the seat while the armpits and sternum (chest) is raised, encourages flexibility of the hips**

# 9 MARICHYASANA III

## Standing twist



- Stand up straight as in exercise 5 with legs and hips positioned as in 8.
- As you breathe in, stretch your left arm up high, rotating to the right as you breathe out with left hand pulling on the right thigh and right hand on lower back
- Improve upright posture as you breathe in, rotating further as you breathe out. Finally, turn your head
- As you breathe out, return to original position
- Switch legs and rotate in the other direction

**Increases flexibility of the spine.**

The Marichyasana III in which the leg is raised on a seat, and the body twisted - increases flexibility of the spine

# 10 UTTANASANA

Downward torso stretch with straight legs

- Stand up straight as in exercise 5
- Extend arms upwards and clasp elbows
- Stretch torso downwards
- Keep legs straight and extended upwards
- After 10 breaths stand up straight again with straight legs and body

**This stimulates circulation and refreshes the mind.**



**The Uttanasana pose - in which the torso stretched downwards, the arms extended upwards and the elbows clasped - stimulates circulation and refreshes the mind**



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