

FLYING HIGH, *you know how I feel*



Up in the air – whether you are cozy at the back of the plane or lounging up front with every comfort conceivable – is a recipe for sickness. There is the respiratory illness that travellers often mention when they get off the plane; the extremely serious cases of deep vein thrombosis; and then, of course, that familiar jetlag nuisance that seems to trail forever while *Lost in Translation* plays on a loop.

Similar to a crèche, aeroplanes are packed with all kinds of contagion – and children. Since you're basically inside a tin hurtling at 850km/h above the clouds with nowhere to hide, best you prepare yourself for the worst.

The USA Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say that touching people and contaminated surfaces around you on a plane easily transmits influenza. Which brings us to the easiest obstruction: a tub of wet wipes. No matter how fellow passengers will gawk and snicker, wiping down the entire area where you're about to be seated for hours is the best solution to avoid



germs (and evidently prevents making friends on the plane – but then again, wiping down the person next to you could also prove useful).

However, wellness isn't just about avoiding germs, or cheating blood clots by walking around frequently, or watching the antithesis of a Cindy Crawford exercise video on the tiny monitor, while rotating your ankles. Wellness is about finding ways in the sky in which to look after the body, mind and, hopefully, spirit.

Yoga, with a few basic plane-friendly movements, is the way around this. Perhaps soon there will be entire yoga classes available (instead of a bar in the middle of the plane) where passengers can go to breathe deeply, have a moment's in-cloud meditation and stretch for 15 or 30 minutes during a long-haul flight. And so the Virabhadrasana, flying warrior pose, suddenly makes a lot more sense.

According to Cathay Pacific (and their new extensive wellness programmes for travellers): "The body's internal circadian clock is only able to reset itself at a rate of about one hour per day." With jetlag being incurable, the most you can do is avoid alcohol, rich foods and switch to your destination's time zone as you land – dinner at dinnertime, bedtime at night, etc. Most people have fewer problems with westward travel, as the day is lengthened, than eastward travel, where the day is shortened. The good news is that exercise (and plenty of water) can help to ease this strange cotton-head sensation.

I plan on leaving this thought for Richard Branson, always the innovator, who will surely jump at the idea of yoga in the sky. Surely he will be adding a buffet of health options to his Virgin Atlantic flights any day now – imagine being able to choose not only from healthy food options, but an array of inflight yoga classes and a series of health products that aim to ease and soothe your flying experience.

So sun in the sky, you know how I feel ... and I am feeling good. ■