

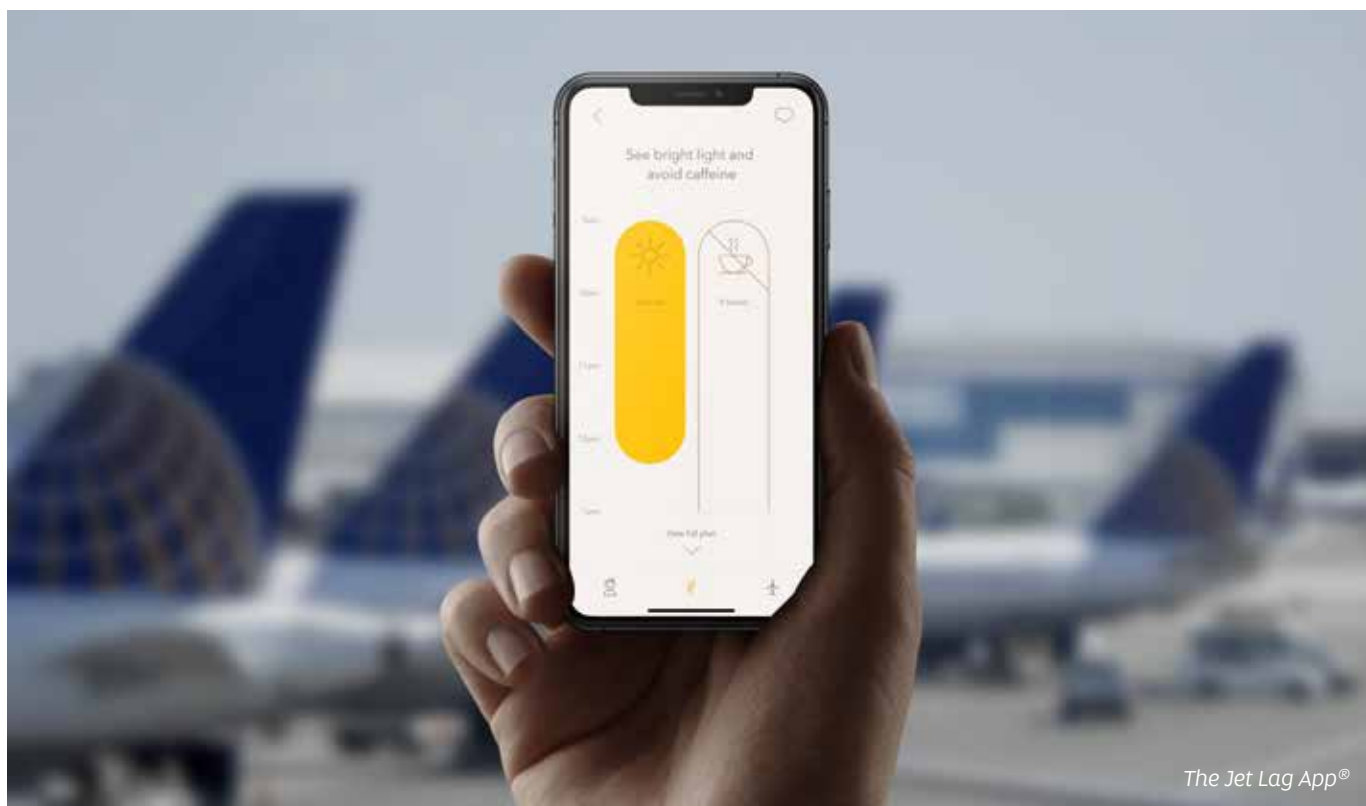
ON THE MOVE AGAIN

Staying healthy when you travel

BY LYDIA GRAHAM



Lydia is a passionate advocate of healthy living. She has launched and positioned many health and wellness-related companies, products, technologies and organizations receiving more than 100 awards nationally and internationally. Her focus in the health sector is specifically on life sciences, aging and longevity. She is a partner and investor in several recognized national brands. She sits on the board of the Buck Institute for Research on Aging whose mission is to eliminate the threat of age-related disease for today's and future generations. It is the only independent research organization globally dedicated to extending the healthy years of life. Like the scientists at the Buck, Graham envisions it will be possible for people to enjoy life at 95 as much as at 25. To support Buck's mission, please visit www.buckinstitute.org.



The Jet Lag App®

AMERICANS ARE ON THE MOVE AGAIN, WITH both business and leisure travel expected to increase. In January, Tripadvisor published its “Travel in 2022” predictions report indicating “2022 is the year of the travel rebound” and further noted “planned travel in 2022 is expected to exceed actual travel in 2019.” Over the past two years, we learned how taking care of ourselves is key. So, how can we minimize risk and continue our commitment to healthy living when we travel?

GETTING THERE BY AIR

Check travel requirements ahead of time to ease the stress of traveling. Rules can change on a dime, but do your research in advance anyway.

Although **airplane air** is highly filtered (HEPA), there is a chance, if someone sick is sitting next to, in front of, or behind you, you could catch a cold, flu, or other virus.

“Research published on March 19 (2018) in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* found

that passengers seated within one row and within two seats laterally of someone with a common infectious respiratory disease had an 80 percent or greater chance of becoming infected. For everyone else on the plane, however, the risk of infection was less than 3 percent.”

Given this information, consider carrying a Wynd Essential portable air purifier and place it in the cup holder between you and your seatmate. Designed by engineers from NASA and MIT and as small as a water bottle, it fits in a cup holder, weighs one pound, has eight hours of battery life, and kills 99 percent of germs. Its radius is around three feet, so this should provide a personal bubble of added confidence. Use it in a taxi or car enroute to your destination (open a window, if possible). Take your Wynd to a business meeting, and you will be surprised that it makes for an interesting conversation starter; everyone will want one. It also makes a great gift during these times.

Mask restrictions are likely to be lifted, so whether you prefer to mask or not on an airplane in-flight (if not

required), **consider always carrying a mask** in your carry-on, such as a KN95 or N95 in case you get unlucky and sit near someone who is coughing or sneezing. The mask will block those large droplets. During heavy surges and/if you have a long-haul flight, consider a mask that adds fresh filtered air. Check out the Easy Flow personal filtration system.

Carry hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent ethanol or 70 percent isopropanol. Alcohol or hand sanitizing wipes also work well. **Clean** the tray table, arm rest and seat recliner button, and seat belt closure. Wipe the air jet before you turn it on. Never turn it on full force or blowing directly in your face.

Be mindful what you touch. Keep the sanitizer handy and try not to touch your face. We touch our face unconsciously many times throughout the day, so wearing a mask as you traverse the airport will prevent you from touching your mouth or nose without realizing it. Otherwise, if that is not your style, pay attention to where your hands are.

Avoid airport bathrooms, if possible, on short trips.

According to Dr. Mark Hernandez, a University of Colorado environmental engineer who studies biological aspects of indoor air quality **“aerosol exposure is minimized if you board last and disembark first.”** (The latter requires a first or business class ticket.) He recommends basing your decisions on these three considerations: 1) exposure (risk) = aerosol concentration (virus) x time; 2) exposure (risk) = a function of the distance from source (how close you are to other (unmasked) people); 3) exposure (risk) = a function of occupant density.

Minimize your time on the aircraft while on the ground. Time on the ground (boarding/disembarking) is different than in flight, because aircraft have very high air exchange rates once the cabin is pressurized and in service (the air in the cabin is recirculated and filtered at high rates once in service). So, whatever you can do to minimize the time and the above factors (occupant density in all phases of air travel, airport, gate, boarding queue and disembarking), the better.

Hydrate before, during, and following long haul flights.

Minimize alcohol (one drink in the air is equivalent to two on the ground) and caffeine in-flight. Alcohol and caffeine are dehydrating and can interfere with your sleep. Because airplane air is so dry and has low humidity, one doctor friend of mine advises keeping nasal passages moist with a simple saline nasal spray. A face spritzer and lip balm keep skin moist.

Drink bottled water. Why? An excerpt from a 2002 Wall Street Journal article explains (hopefully, things have changed since, but it is not worth taking chances based on what they found):

While “U.S. researchers have tested it ... with mixed results that suggest you don't know what you're drinking. But we do—because we tested it. We packed sample vials and took to the skies, hopping on 14 different flights everywhere from Atlanta to Sydney, Australia. On each, we collected water from the galley and lavatory taps, sealed them up and sent them to a lab for analysis. The results of our water-quality snapshot: a long list of microscopic life you don't want to drink, from *Salmonella* and *Staphylococcus* to tiny insect eggs. Worse, contamination was the rule, not the exception: Almost all of the bacteria levels were tens, sometimes hundreds, of times above U.S. government limits. ‘This water is not potable by any means,’ says Donald Hendrickson, the director of Hoosier Microbiology Laboratories in Muncie, Ind., which tested our samples.

“The good news, of course, is that this water isn't the main drinking supply for passengers, who usually get bottled H₂O from the beverage carts. But plenty of people depend on the plane's taps to wash their hands and brush their teeth. And while the airlines say they rarely serve tap water, many flight attendants say it isn't that uncommon: When the bottled water runs out, they turn to the tanks—which, under federal regulations, are supposed to provide drinkable water.”

There are all kinds of **theories about how to beat jet lag**; sadly, most do not work. One of the best resources is the Jet Lag App® (www.timeshifter.com). It will create a personalized jet lag plan in less than a minute. Download the app and create your plan so you can follow it at least two days before departure.

Move during your flight, even in your seat. While sitting is the new smoking, sitting for extended periods on a plane is particularly problematic due to the potential for deep vein thrombosis (blood clots in the legs). Fitbit and Qantas (they should know something about long haul flights) offer some in-flight exercise recommendations.

Wearing compression socks even on cross country flights may help avoid post-travel clots, ankle swelling, and fluid retention which can cause unnecessary fatigue. You will be surprised how much difference this small hack makes—and not just for older adults. Wear loose clothing and throw in a warm shawl or jacket.

BOOKING HOTELS

If you are concerned about **traveling during flu or virus surges**, consider booking hotels or resorts with private entrances that are on one floor without shared elevators. In warm weather, outdoor dining is a great option. Ask if it is available at the hotel restaurant. Additionally, hotel room windows that open, preferably with screens, are a plus for good air ventilation.

PACKING

Pill bags are perfect for packing medications or supplements. Pack the bottle for any medications so you have that information or take a copy of your prescription. Pill bags are great to pack each day's supply and set aside what you need in-flight. I throw all stocked packets into a Ziplock bag, taking one packet out each day. Side note: the tiny bags also are great for storing jewelry such as earrings or small necklaces, as you can see through them.

Take your own food and healthy snacks for the plane, like unsalted nuts (if you are not allergic), healthy bars, fresh fruit (e.g., bananas, apples), crudité with hummus, trail mix or paleo granola, or nut butter packets. Use your imagination and scour your grocery store in anticipation of your trip.

For those practicing intermittent fasting or fasting, the flight and transit time might be the perfect time to fast.

To treat small injuries on the go, check out Welly's Human Repair Kit. Toss in an extra tube of Neosporin or triple antibiotic ointment or an anti-itch cream if mosquitoes might be at your destination. Add over-the-counter cold and flu remedies, just in case.

PLAN FOR EXERCISE ANYWHERE ANYTIME

Pack a bag, not a suitcase but **a jumbo Ziplock® with arm and leg bands, a yoga strap, and a tennis ball** which feels great on trigger points of tight muscles. Prior to traveling, download or bookmark videos or workouts with the bands if you do not know how to use them.

Even if your hotel has a gym, having a personal yoga mat for stretches, poses, stomach crunches or floor exercises is ideal. If you do go to the hotel gym, sanitize the mat, or put a towel over it before using it. My favorite travel yoga mat is Manduka's Yogatoes yoga mat towel. Eco-friendly and non-skid, it folds flat in luggage and is easy to wash post-trip. There is something creepy about exercising on the floor of a hotel room where countless strangers have walked, so ask for extra bath towels to put under your mat or an extra sheet to use during your stay which works even better.

Grab those running shoes for running or walking. Vet the surrounding area with locals, especially if you're traveling solo. Some hotels have an activity concierge who can run with you if you ask.

Plan exercises sans equipment, which allows more flexibility on when and where you work out. Squats are one of the best overall exercises, as are lunges. Consider a flight of stairs an invitation for cardio. If you have your mat, do push-ups and stretching. Stretches such as side stretches, runners stretch, arm circles, standing figure fours do not require a mat. There are plenty more to choose from. Make a list before you leave, if it helps. Or plan your travel routine with a trainer before you leave.

EATING AWAY FROM HOME

Every meal away does not need to be a special occasion. Locate restaurants catering to your individual preferences and dietary needs. Do not be afraid to substitute vegetables for starches. Ask for steamed vegetables and broiled or baked meats or fish, if you eat those. If a meal is one of your special vacay splurges, enjoy it and start a new day tomorrow.

If organic or local sustainable options are not available, **avoid the Dirty Dozen™** foods when eating out, if possible, as they are the most contaminated. According to the Environmental Working Group's "2021 Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce™," these foods made the list: 1) strawberries, 2) spinach, 3) kale, collard, and mustard greens, 4) nectarines, 5) apples, 6) grapes, 7) cherries, 8) peaches, 9) pears, 10) bell and hot peppers, 11) celery, 12) tomatoes.

While it may be tempting to consume **too many glasses of wine or cocktails each night on holiday, these drinks add calories and sugar** and will dehydrate you, disturbing both your sleep and blood sugar (the two can be connected). You will surely feel better and enjoy the next day's activities more if you limit your intake; you will look better, too. Your skin will love you for it.

Usually, one of the first things I do **upon arrival is find a market** to buy additional water, nuts, fruits, and healthy snacks and yogurts to supplement the hotel mini bar. I always travel with my own tea. Even the mini bars in the finest hotels are not always the healthiest. Depending on your location and transportation, either order online for pick-up or delivery or find the nearest healthy corner market and walk there.

HAVE FUN AND AN ADVENTURE

Check your attitude. Especially while traveling on business. Embrace curiosity and expectation rather than a sense of dread. Even business trips can be an adventure.

Vacations break our routines and can lower our stress, so flow with it. Enjoy the humorous and joyful moments along the way. Laughter is good for us.

Wishing you safe and healthy travels.

Note: Nothing in this article constitutes medical advice. Please consult your physician if you have questions before undertaking any physical activity or dietary changes.