

TRAVEL

16

SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2010



Time	Status
11:35A	Cancelled
10:50A	Cancelled
11:00A	Cancelled
10:45A	Cancelled
11:01A	Cancelled
10:32A	Cancelled
10:40A	Cancelled
12:29P	Cancelled
10:45A	Cancelled



PHOTOS: BLOOMBERG

How to use diet and preparation to beat jet lag

Rather than popping pills, a few pretrip regimen changes could lessen the pain of traveling across time zones

BY JOE SHARKEY
NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE, NEW YORK

My worst experience with travel fatigue occurred about 10 years ago, when I impulsively bought a theater ticket in London after a sleepless flight from New York that was followed by a day of meetings.

I got lucky at the box office of the Lyric Theater in the West End, scoring a single front-row center seat for that night's performance of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, starring Jessica Lange. But when I settled into my seat at the theater, it occurred to me that this was a long play. Before the curtain went up, I asked a favor of a woman in the next seat.

"If I happen to accidentally doze off, would you mind giving me a nudge?" I asked her.

"Certainly," she said.

Sure enough, well into the second act, I lost a mighty struggle and nodded off. Evidently, the word "nudge" did not fully translate, because the woman gave me a shot in the ribs that startled me awake as if someone had fired a gun.

"Wah?" I blurted out — and opened my eyes to see Lange, stage front, less than 3m away, staring at me with alarm as she delivered a poignant line. Mortified, I burrowed into my seat.

So this is a long-delayed apology. I am terribly sorry, Lange. Jet lag made me do it.

Jet lag is back on the agenda for business travelers, especially as long-haul international traffic picks up again. In February, according to the International Air Transport Association, international passenger traffic was 13.5 percent higher than in February 2009 on the routes that are typically the longest, the Asian-Pacific markets.

There is endless advice online about jet lag. Drugs are frequently mentioned, and a recent favorite is Nuvigil, used to treat excessive sleepiness. Nuvigil's manufacturer, Cephalon, has so far not succeeded in obtaining US government approval for its plan to market the drug as a remedy for jet lag.

But the approach I hear most often from long-haul travelers involves diet and preparation. "Why would you take a pill that your body then has to shake off?" said Lynne Waller Scanlon, the author, with Charles Ehret, of *Overcoming Jet Lag*, which was a best seller in the mid-1980s but went out of print until she revised and republished it last year under a snappier title, *The Cure for Jet Lag*.

The book is based on research by Ehret, who died in 2007. He studied the relationship between living organisms and time cycles and said, "Cells have clocks."

The book, available at back2press.com, lays out a treatment system for jet lag based on pretrip diet and conditioning to reset the body's internal clock. The book suggests resetting the body clock so that it will be in sync with the time at the destination. One to three days before a trip, the authors suggest low-calorie meals. In flight, avoid or strictly limit alcohol, and use coffee or tea to persuade the body clock that it's daytime. If it's morning after flying all night, resist sleep and "flood your eyes with daylight," they suggest.

While all long-haul travel can cause normal fatigue, travel across time zones causes the body to react with the most pronounced effects of jet lag, including disorientation and a general sense of malaise.

"Flying from, say, New York to Buenos Aires, you should not experience jet lag," said Patrick Smith, a pilot who flies international routes for a major airline. "But that's not to say you won't feel fatigued" after any long-haul flight, said Smith, who also writes a column called Ask the Pilot for Salon.

Jet lag is "a function of our internal clocks, and there is no way to change that fact," said Lynne Lamborg, the author, with Michael Smolensky, of *The Body Clock Guide to Better Health*.

In the last few years, the global airlines have put more emphasis on accommodating the need for in-flight sleep — at least in the business and first-class cabins, where international airlines earn most of their revenue.

But at the same time, international airlines also promote extensive in-flight entertainment selections, as well as high-end menus, including quality wine lists, in premium classes. Indulging in these would seem to work against dietary regimens to combat jet lag. But Scanlon says redemption is nevertheless attainable.

"What do you do if you can't implement this program ahead of the trip, or if you've blown it and had a complete debauch on the plane?" she said. "Well, when you get off that plane, you get on the program right away. It may not be perfect, but you will feel much, much better."

Who owns the middle seat arm rests on an airplane, really? How do you break away from the marathon talker in seat 12E? And what do you do, if anything, about the angelic-looking child kicking the back of your seat?

Incivility and rudeness are often the product of stress, and there are few situations more primed for stress these days than travel — especially air travel.

Once glamorous, air travel is now a test of patience, and sometimes even endurance. Today's travelers face the reality of rigorous security procedures on top of flight delays and cancellations, anxiety about flying, cramped seating and reduced or no meal service.

How to cope? Patience, courtesy and flexibility, and a sense of humor will serve you well. While you may have little or no control over long security lines, weather delays, the cabin environment or your choice of seatmate, you can control how you react to adversity.

All the more reason to come as prepared as possible to circumvent predictable problems. Here are a few tips, both defensive and offensive, to get you through your travels with less stress and more civility.

- Arrive early. This may be obvious, but it's often undervalued. As your stress level rises your capacity for tolerance and civility often decreases.
- Stay calm if your gate agent gives you bad news. Losing your temper won't get you there faster, and it may lose you the sympathy of the one person who could possibly pull some strings.
- Dress and pack with security in mind to avoid delaying other passengers. Do your homework on current screening procedures and airline policies for checked and carry-on luggage. There are still clueless passengers who pack large bottles of liquids in their carry-on luggage—a nuisance to everyone behind them.

Wear shoes that are easy to take on and off, and keep items you may have to remove from your luggage for screening, such as laptops, readily accessible. This keeps the line moving, which keeps tempers calm. If you're a frequent traveler who knows the drill, be patient with those who are new at this, they may be nervous.

- If you can't choose your environment, create your own. Bring an eyeshade for napping, and use headphones to listen to music or movies (whether in the terminal or on the plane), or earplugs to block out unwanted conversations. If your seatmate won't stop chatting with you, smile and say, "Well, it's been nice speaking with you. I'm going to read for a bit now."

- Do your fellow travelers a favor and step away from others in the terminal to take cellphone calls, and keep calls brief while in security lines.

- The middle seat arm rests are shared property. That said, it's generous for the aisle and window seat holders to give the middle passenger a chance to claim them first.

- Traveling is trying for adults, and even more so for children. Crying babies are part of the air travel package, so it's a good idea to stash some earplugs in your carry-on. However, if a child is kicking the back of your seat, it's okay to ask their parent to have them stop. Smile and say, "I know it's tough for kids, but would you mind asking him not to kick the seat? Thanks." Keep it short and offer some understanding, and it's likely the parent and child will comply.

- Reading over someone's shoulder is nosy and intrusive. Avoid the temptation and come prepared with books, magazines, or a laptop of your own. Privacy filters for computers and smart phones will bar wandering eyes. If 6A is taking an unhealthy interest in your screen, meet his gaze briefly. This will jolt his awareness — the best medicine for rude behavior.

- With airlines cutting back on complimentary in-flight meals and snacks, the smart traveler packs his own. Avoid foods with strong odors that may bother your neighbors though, such as tuna fish, egg salad, or a garlicky meatball sub.

You can't always choose your neighbors on the plane or in the boarding area, but you can take responsibility for your own comfort and come as prepared as possible.

(Anna Post is the spokeswoman for The Emily Post Institute, a US-based organization founded in 1946 that addresses societal concerns including business etiquette, raising polite children and civility. The Emily Post Institute's Web site is www.emilypost.com)



Modern etiquette: travel in the 21ST CENTURY

Armed with this simple guide, good manners needn't become lost luggage

BY ANNA POST
REUTERS, BURLINGTON, VERMONT