



Most overseas holidaymakers are familiar with the sickly sensation of jetlag, which occurs when you travel rapidly across time zones. It passes through your body like a shot of anaesthetic – weighing down every muscle and weakening your limbs.

But when it comes to finding a solution, Brisbane globetrotters have mastered the art of hitting the ground running.

Channel 10 news presenter Marie-Louise Theile says long-haul flights can take their toll on your body, and she believes in getting as much sleep as possible while on the plane.

“As soon as I’m on board I aim to reset my body clock to the place of arrival, drink an enormous amount of water, remove my make-up and apply loads of moisturiser,” says Marie-Louise, who will read her last news bulletin on December 14 and then become a stay-at-home mum to Alexandra, 13, Josephine, 10, and James, 4.

When travelling with her family into a different time zone, Marie-Louise tries to take a flight that leaves as late as possible, or at least has a stopover.

“We once did running races around the airport,” she says. “It gave the children a chance to stretch their legs and change into their pyjamas, so they could get back on the plane ready for dinner and bed.”

Stretching out and having enough legroom on the plane are musts for Queensland Bulls’ fast bowler Michael Kasprovicz, who is 194cm tall. When the cricketer packs his whites to head to other Australian capital cities for state competitions, he ensures he has an exit row seat for more room during the flight.

Michael has also joined the Australian team on several long-distance trips, including to England, and his laptop always comes too. “When I travel internationally, I like to keep things homely and these days a laptop has many uses – I can play music, watch DVDs and check emails,” he says.

“When we arrive, we’re encouraged to go outside for a run in the sunlight as this helps with a quicker recovery from jetlag.”

This is good advice, according to Professor Julie Campbell AO, director of The Wesley Research Institute, who explains jetlag as an upset in your daily bodily rhythm, known as circadian.

“To reduce it you can take melatonin (a hormone made in the pineal gland of the brain) tablets, and drink plenty of water during the flight,” says Julie, also a medical researcher at The University of Queensland.

“When you arrive at your destination, spend time out in sunlight as soon as possible as this re-sets your biological clock to the current time zone.”



This is pretty much how fashion designer Julie Tengdahl approaches her seasonal trips to Milan and Paris.

"I like to arrive in a city around 6am and try to get straight into the time zone," says Julie, who jets off in February and September to source fabric for new collections for her Tengdahl Australia label.

"I have a flat in Paris and try to arrange to arrive on market days so I can buy fresh fruit and vegetables to cook my own meals."

Fellow fashion designer George Wu, who also travels frequently, is a firm believer that drinking juice before a meal, and hot tea after a meal, ensures he hops off international flights in peak condition.

The young trendsetter stretches his muscles prior to boarding, and practises meditation during the flight. "When you're stuck in a seat with nowhere to go it's the best time to try it," he says.

George also says a facial mist is a great aid to keep your face hydrated during flight, and his iPod is handy to play music to induce a calm mood.

Jude Turner, of Chelmer, has also done her fair share of travelling as wife of Flight Centre's founder Graham "Skroo"

Turner. Jude says self-discipline is important in fighting jetlag. "If you arrive in the morning and can't make it through the day, have an afternoon nap, but you must have dinner and go to bed at a normal time," she says.

"Sometimes I think I don't have jetlag, but it'll hit me on the third day and I can't keep my eyes open, no matter how interesting the other person I'm with is."

Settling into your accommodation venue as soon as you arrive is the key to feeling comfortable for Virgin Blue cabin crew member Nikki Duce, of Westlake.

"Your routine has been displaced so it's good to make your room feel a little like home," says Nikki. "Try placing your toiletries in the bathroom straight away, hanging the necessary clothes and setting up your suitcase neatly for easy access to what you'll need most."

If she knows the area is safe, she also likes to take a stroll to stretch her legs in the fresh air. "You can often stumble on little treasures or events on one of these walks."

It is no surprise that experienced pilot Paul Considine knows how to stay alert, climbing into the cockpit on a weekly basis to navigate air travel across Australia as well as ferry flights around the world.

The Virgin Blue captain says it's important to sleep well before a flight, especially for long international sectors, avoid stodgy food, and drink plenty of water during the flight.

Domestic flights are much shorter but he says travellers need to be aware of the time differences and the impact these can have on your body clock. "Even a Brisbane to Perth flight with a two hour time difference can have an impact," Paul says.

Dr Deborah Mills advises people about overseas travel at her city and Stafford clinics (www.thetraveldoctor.com.au).

She says some people suffer from jetlag more than others and warns that it's worst when flying east, so if possible plan your trip to head westwards.

"Jetlag is nature's way of making you look like your passport photo," Deborah says. "There is some suggestion that along with sleep, eating and kidney function, your immune system may also be disrupted by jetlag."

She says research shows that 5mg of melatonin taken at bedtime two to five days after arrival can decrease jetlag, especially if travelling eastwards. This can help adjust your body clock so you can settle into your new environment with ease.

And if that doesn't work, you can just push through the pain barrier with some retail therapy in your new surroundings.

Straighten up & fly right

- Drink lots of water to stay hydrated during your flight.
- Try to get an exit row seat for extra leg room.
- Sleep onboard to save energy.
- Avoid eating stodgy food.
- Drink limited, if any, alcohol.
- Wear comfortable clothing during your flight.
- Go out and greet the day when you arrive.
- Wake up and go to bed at the right times in your new location to reset your body clock.
- When you arrive at your destination, unpack the things you'll use most to make your room feel familiar.
- Take 5mg of melatonin at bedtime, after arrival.
- Try to fly towards the west as jetlag can be most severe on eastbound journeys.



Globe trotters ... cricketers Andy Bichel and Michael Kasprowicz, opposite page, soak up the sun on the Norwegian Crown liner in South American waters; Julie Tengdahl in Paris; Marie-Louise Theile at Tokyo Disneyland with children James and Josephine; and George Wu in Europe

