

Read the article about long distance flights, and then complete the notes on the following page.

Long distances on air



Long-haul flights have just got longer, with a non-stop flights in operation to connect major cities of the world. But long hours in the air create its own challenges. Such an ultra-long-haul flight journey can be exhausting, if needed preparations are not taken. Normally, the aircraft is specifically designed for the journey with more space and extensive entertainment services. The flight crew are also specially trained.

From this side of the matter, the seasoned traveller is also more aware of the health risks associated with a flight that covers more than 15000 kilometres) in distance. Being confined in a narrow space in the air with lower oxygen levels for up to continuous 18 or 20 hours is abnormal for the human body. For those who suffer from deep vein thrombosis (DVT) the problem really starts occurring after 12 hours (in-flight). This could lead to an increase in chances of heart attacks.

Doctors believe prevention is better than cure when it comes to in-flight health. Passengers on ultra-long range flights need to be provided with flight socks and, if necessary, tablets for thinning the blood. It is not just the health and vitality of the passenger that is at stake on a flight of this length, but also that of the flight crew. With this purpose, crew are trained on fatigue management and how to adjust to the local time at different countries. They are also given sessions of instructions on specific exercises. Generally, the companies which run long haul flights take care of the diet of the crew and keep them eat lightly in-flight.

However, passengers are trading in health concerns for convenience. An extra- long flight means passengers do not need to break up their journey and change planes. Various market surveys show that they like to board once, de-plane once. It is saving time.

"From Los Angeles to Singapore, passengers are saving two and a half hours. And to New York passengers are saving up to four hours in flying time." Thai Airways is also launching a non-stop service to New York from Bangkok in near future to compete with Singapore Airlines. It is planning a similar service to Chicago. However, there is still a question of whether longer non-stop flights will become popular. "They will certainly have a role in the future of aviation; there is no doubt about it. People will prefer to fly non-stop if it is available," says Chris Johnson, an airline analyst. "But we are reaching the limits." Problems like possible infections, especially for people who smoke, also stand on the way of its success.

At the same time, many are there who hope long-haul flights will flourish in coming years. Passengers enjoy the comfort of avoiding formalities at various airports. Christopher Douglas, a customer relations expert points out that if passengers can plan and do their own activities, such online business conferences, as there won't be the need of frequent break. Another scope of the long journey is the scope of an ad-hoc flight community for passengers, providing them with more time-pass or entertainments.

Health risks of long journey in flights

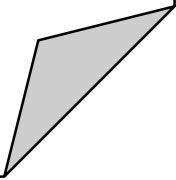
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Precautions taken on board

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Reasons why long-haul flights can become popular

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ANSWER KEY

Health risks of long journey in flights:

- lower oxygen levels (for up to continuous 18 or 20 hours)
- deep vein thrombosis (DVT) / increase in chances of heart attacks
- possible infections (especially for people who smoke)

Precautions taken on board: (3 points)

- flight socks
- (if necessary) tablets for thinning the blood
- diet of the crew / crew eat lightly

Reasons why long-haul flights can become popular: (3points)

- convenience / passengers do not need to break up their journey and change planes / non-stop flights
- avoiding formalities at various airports
- passengers can plan and do their own activities/ online business conferences
- ad-hoc flight community for passengers