



BG Verkehr

Berufsgenossenschaft für
Transport und Verkehrswirtschaft

Aviation Industry



**Safe and Sound
from Take-off to Landing**

Publisher

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1 Welcome on Board

Foreword for fast readers

We have summarized the most important features in a small box at the end of each chapter. If you notice an interesting point or tip as you are scanning the complete text, mark it in some manner so that you can find it again easily. The more time you can save, the more you can spend on maintaining your on-board health and safety. And now, don't delay – start leafing through the pages!

Foreword for everyone who wishes to avoid accidents and illness

Have you ever been able to avoid an accident because you followed regulations which others simply chose to ignore? We, like you, strongly believe that accidents are best prevented by taking seriously and following advice pertaining to safety. In an effort to provide all flight attendants with information about potential dangers and how to avoid them, we have compiled this brochure with the help of safety experts and occupational health specialists.

You will no doubt be familiar with many of the tips but you may still come across some new aspects which will in future help you to spot dangerous situations and even warn your colleagues. There are many statutory regulations and laws which protect you on board and on the apron. Even in your free time, there is plenty you can do to reduce the risk of physical or mental illness. That is why we have also compiled advice from dieticians and sports scientists. We are also certain that you can benefit from reading in this brochure of your colleagues' experiences with fear of flying, sleep disorders and stressful situations.

As this book is set out in the order of a flight duty, we advise you to read the chapters in the correct order. That way you will not miss any important aspects. We hope that this brochure will help you to continue flying accident-free and hope that you will enjoy reading it.

Foreword for those who trust to luck they will stay healthy

Are you absolutely certain that you will stay healthy, fit and safe and sound until your last working day? And has everything gone well until now? If so, you have either done everything right or have quite simply been very lucky. If nothing else, your positive outlook on life is a good basis for a happy and healthy life. But you know that already. You may think that some of the safety regulations are over the top. Naturally, even positive aspects can sometimes be overdone. This also applies to having a relaxed attitude towards your own health and safety which can in time become “laissez-faire” carelessness or overconfidence. So what is the right balance? Only you can decide this for yourself.

The important tips and advice compiled by safety experts, occupational health specialists and cabin and cockpit crew colleagues in this brochure may prompt you to reconsider your own attitude to protecting and looking after yourself. That in itself is a huge step forward. And where a tip could be useful to others if not to you, pass it on to other colleagues.

Begin with the chapter that appeals most to you and then simply keep on browsing the brochure. You may even find that addressing the issue of health and safety at work can actually be fun. We hope that you will enjoy reading and wish you a happy and healthy life at home and at work.

A few more words to Pursers/Senior Flight Attendants/CdCs

As the manager on board, you play a particularly important role in preventing accidents:

- You serve as an example to many flight attendants, especially the more junior crew members, who follow your lead and your example. The more you watch out for your own safety and health, the more the flight attendants will do the same.
- You personally can very much to ensure that service procedures are relaxed and orderly and do not become chaotic and hectic. If it is turbulent or the flight time is shorter than scheduled, have the courage to end the inflight service.
- You can instruct your colleagues to get rid of any sources of danger quickly and/or report them to maintenance staff.
- In your pre-flight briefing, and again later during the flight, you can pass on tips about how to work safely and healthily. You will find suggestions in this brochure.
- You can very much influence the atmosphere on board. Remember that mental stress can also lead to insecurity and a lack of attentiveness. There are far less accidents when the mood is calm and relaxed.

2 On the Way to the Airport



Approximately one-fifth of all work-related accidents happen on the way to or from work. Whilst your employer has very little influence on this, you do!

Fatigue plays a decisive role in one out of every four or five serious traffic accidents. On long drives on the motorway and on monotonous routes, a driver's concentration decreases while the risk of falling asleep increases. Tired eyes, the need to rub your eyes continually and shivering are warning signs which should be taken seriously. The same applies if you find it hard remembering situations that have just occurred.

As such, the regulation which stipulates that your domicile should be close to the airport serves to protect your safety as it avoids the need for long drives before or after work.

Do you think that most accidents occur before or after flight duty? What is the main cause of carelessness and leads to potential accidents? Is it the stress of leaving home a bit too late and the concern over arriving at work on time or is it the physical exhaustion after a flight? Studies have shown that more flight attendants have accidents on the way to work than on their way home.

Tips for safe driving in road traffic:

- Allow enough time for driving to the airport!
- If you are going on a longer rotation, you may need more time to say goodbye to your family. Are there things which always take time and which you have not reckoned with in your scheduling?
- If you have a longer drive on the motorway, allow enough time for at least a short break!
- If you feel tired and exhausted after work, use one of the rest areas before embarking on a longer drive home! If you notice any signs of fatigue during the drive, take a break as soon as possible!
- If you have to get out of your car, particularly in the dark and if you are wearing your dark uniform, a high-visibility vest makes you more visible to other drivers. Keep your vest next to you in the car so that you can put it on even before you get out. High-visibility vests cost very little and are a clever investment in your safety.
- Make sure that the tread on your car tyres is still good! The effects of tyre condition in critical weather conditions still continue to amaze even experts. Have winter tyres fitted on your car in good time during the autumn and bear in mind that the weather can turn nasty while you are away. For this reason, remember to make sure you have enough wiper fluid and antifreeze!
- Loose-fitting sandals and high-heeled shoes can affect your reaction time. It is better to have a pair of flat, comfortable shoes in the car.
- Talking on a cell phone, even hands-free, partially distracts you from your driving, particularly if the conversation is emotionally stressful. As such, try to keep the call short and fix an appointment, or stop and finish the conversation at a car park.

By the way! Have you ever participated in driver safety training? It is fun and you can learn a lot. Check the internet for details (in Germany: www.bg-verkehr.de).





Having reached the car park safely does not mean that you have got to work safely. Even users of public transport face dangers: Every year, there are more than 255,000 occupational and commuting accidents of pedestrians in Germany – stumbling, slipping or falling, sometimes resulting in serious injuries. Walking and climbing stairs are

such everyday occurrences that we barely even think about what we are doing – they “happen” without us even thinking. However, especially those of us carrying lots of luggage should take care with every step we take. Carrying bags in both hands can cause us to lose our balance very easily when climbing steps, quite apart from the fact that we can’t hold onto a handrail. That is why it is better to take the lift, whenever possible, even if it takes a little more time.

While we are on the subject of steps:

We would consider steps without a handrail to be dangerous and some might even refuse to use them. Yet it is amazing how little use is made of handrails. What do you think about this?

If you follow these tips, you will land up safe and sound at your work before you even take off.

Important aspects in brief: Many accidents are caused by fatigue or stress and time pressures. For this reason, always plan enough time and take any signs of fatigue very seriously. Keep a high-visibility vest and comfortable shoes in your car! If you have a lot of luggage, using a lift is always safer. If you choose to use steps, hold onto the handrail whenever possible.

3 Baggage-handling and your Back



A strong, healthy back is worth its weight in gold. Yet many people do not realise this until they are suffering from tension, nerve and muscle pain or, even worse, have a slipped disc. Virtually every person in the industrialised nations in the West suffers from back pain at least once in their life. Back problems are one of the most frequent causes of inability to work and restrict a person's quality of life to a tremendous degree.

As a flight attendant, you are constantly on the move and do not have to sit down for hours. That is very good for your back!

On the other hand, your job entails carrying and lifting luggage – up and down stairs, into the crew bus, into the car, at security controls, in and out of overhead lockers etc. These are critical moments for your back!



muscles, sinews, nerves and ligaments in your back strong and flexible, physiotherapists and doctors recommend

- back training or yoga,
- short back exercises on a daily basis,
- building strong stomach and back muscles,
- consistent optimal exercise,
- using both halves of the body equally, and
- wearing clothing which keeps the body sufficiently warm.

Many health insurance companies now recognise the importance of prevention and will pay for the majority of costs for authorised courses or may themselves even provide such courses. This is an offer which you should take up. Your back will thank you for it.

When lifting

- stand as close as possible to the item of luggage, with your legs hip-width apart, feet in line with your hips,
- deliberately keep your back straight and look forward,
- also use the strength in your leg muscles,
- avoid any sudden movements or twisting your spine, and
- remember – first lift your luggage into the crew bus and then get in yourself!

Lighter is better

In the 1930s, stewardesses and their luggage were not allowed to weigh more than a combined total of 57 kilos. Thankfully those days are long gone but keeping your luggage as light as possible is nevertheless in the interests of your back. Naturally you need a lot of creature comforts to feel at home in your hotel room but think carefully and critically about

- what you really need and leave the rest at home,
- that many cosmetic items are now available in small bottles,
- that many hotels provide kettles, so that you can leave your own one at home, and
- that sometimes it can be amazing what has gathered in a flight kit over the course of the years!

And whenever possible, transport your luggage, including hand baggage, on a luggage trolley, rather than carrying it.

Remember to keep passageways free

Of course you as a flight attendant do not have to be told how important it is to keep emergency exits and passageways free of obstacles. Remember however that this does not just apply on board but also elsewhere. When you put down your luggage, keep doors, stairs and passageways free of obstacles.

Important aspects in brief: Lifting and carrying place a strain on your neck and back. Back training and yoga courses teach exercises for strengthening muscles, stretching and relaxing which can help you to find the best ways to spread the strain equally between both sides of your body. When lifting, it is essential that you avoid any sudden movements or twisting of the spine. And just think: the more you leave at home, the lighter your luggage will be!

4 On the Apron



In the crew bus

Traffic accidents can also occur on the apron. With speed limits of between 30 and 50 km/h, sudden braking, especially in the event of a rear-end collision, results in enormous acceleration forces which the human body cannot absorb on its own. Anyone who is not wearing a seat belt can be thrown far forward and sustain serious injuries. That is why you should always wear your seat belt if one is fitted. If you have to stand in the crew bus, remember to adopt a firm stance and hold on tight.

Have you ever been hit in the ankles by a suitcase which rolled free as the bus went round a bend? We don't advise it! Instead, use the baggage stowage facilities in the crew bus to stow your luggage safely and using belts, if available, to secure your bags. Point out these facts to your colleagues as well, since everyone's ankles are at risk.

For larger crews, it is better to order a second bus so that everyone can hold on properly and everyone's luggage can be stowed safely.

Footways

There is a lot going on around an aircraft which is being prepared for departure. Fueling trucks, catering trucks, luggage containers and other vehicles have to manoeuvre in a very tight area and under time pressure. The drivers are focussed on following the correct procedures for docking at the aircraft. Under these circumstances, they can easily miss noticing another person, particularly when it is dark, foggy or raining heavily. Bear in mind also that the windscreens and mirrors on de-icing vehicles can be so covered with liquid de-icer that the driver sees virtually nothing.

In addition to traffic accidents, injuries are frequently sustained around the aircraft's fuselage by people bumping into sharp parts of the aircraft, stumbling over cables, pipes and brake blocks and falling prey to dripping hydraulic fluid.

In order to protect you from such accidents, there are fixed paths for pedestrians even on the apron. If you are not familiar with them, ask your employer!



Don't take any dangerous short-cuts and never walk under the aircraft fuselage!

On the apron, cabin crew are only permitted to take the shortest path from the crew bus to the aircraft / luggage compartment and back.

If deviating from this route is absolutely necessary, you have to wear a high-visibility vest.

Noise levels from running engines or from an APU can be extremely high on the apron and can cause permanent damage. Protect your ears, which are sensitive to such noise levels, by always using ear plugs – at the very least when you leave the crew bus!

Important aspects in brief: It is important to stand firmly and hold onto a handle even in a crew bus. If the bus is equipped with seat belts, use them. Make sure that luggage cannot slide around.

Always stay on the stipulated paths on the apron and bear in mind that other people may have restricted visibility. If you have to take another path, wear a high-visibility vest and protect your ears with ear plugs.

5 Doors and Stairs



The gap between the aircraft door and the stairs is without any doubt a trouble spot in flight operations. Despite modern technology and prescribed procedures, there are still cases of people falling out of an aircraft or from the stairs and injuring themselves seriously or even being killed. As a flight attendant, you are on the one hand at risk yourself whilst at the same time bearing responsibility for the safe embarkation and disembarkation of passengers.

Adhering consistently to the prescribed procedures and signals is the safest way for crew members to avoid an accident.

Every airline has its own operating procedures for door and stair handling, with exact processes, signals and responsibilities for when stairs are docked at or taken away from an aircraft and when doors are opened. If you are not familiar with the procedures, you have only to ask!

Cooperating with the driver of the aircraft stairs

A lack of communication and/or a misunderstanding in communication with ground staff are frequent reasons for accidents.

It may well be that the driver of the mobile stairs has positioned the stairs at the aircraft but has to reposition them. Such dangerous

incidents are often reported and can only be avoided if the crew consistently observes the stipulated signals of communication. In other words, stairs are never cleared for use unless the driver has given the thumbs-up!

Positioning the aircraft stairs

The aircraft stairs must be positioned so that the upper platform is flush to the aircraft door threshold or the drop is no greater than the height of one step (that is, approximately the width of a magazine). This will allow you to check the correct height if required.

Opening and closing an unsecured aircraft door

There may be exceptional reasons for opening or closing an aircraft door that is not secured by stairs, a jetway or a catering truck. This situation calls for particular care and attentiveness. In such cases, the door strap has to be attached before the door is opened or closed. Moreover, another crew member has to hold the crew member who is opening or closing the door.

When closing the door, it is important to ensure that you have a firm grip on a handle inside the aircraft before you use the other hand to pull the door into its frame.

For doors which cannot be closed with one hand, the strap may only be removed after the door is firmly closed.

Standing on the aircraft stairs

Particularly if an aircraft is parked at its stand for a longer period, the stairs may be taken away without prior warning. If you are standing on the stairs to get some fresh air or a

little sun, never lean against the aircraft! This prop may disappear before you have time to find somewhere else to hold onto.

Once again, in this situation, bear in mind the noise levels caused by aircraft which are taxiing and taking off and protect your sensitive sensory organs with ear plugs!



Rules for opening and closing aircraft doors safely:

- Only open a door and allow people onto the stairs once the ground handling crew has given clearance by way of the prescribed signal!
- When opening and closing an aircraft door, remember to have a firm grasp on the aircraft with one hand and to use the other hand for the door.
- If an aircraft door has to be opened although it is not secured by stairs or a hub truck, the door strap must be attached and a cabin crew member in position to secure the door.
- Stairs may only be taken away once the aircraft door has been closed. Make this clear to the ground handling crew, if necessary.
- When the door is closed, the removal of the aircraft stairs must be carefully observed.
- The ground handling crew is solely responsible for handling the aircraft stairs; the crew is responsible for opening the door safely.
- Always follow your respective airline's prescribed and trained procedures for opening and closing aircraft doors!
- If there is cause to deviate from these procedures, always inform the other parties involved.

Important aspects in brief: Communication, even non-verbal, between flight attendants and mobile stair drivers must be clear at all times. It is particularly important that the prescribed procedures and signals are observed. The difference in height between the door threshold and the upper level on stairs shall never be more than the height of one step. If doors have to be opened or closed although they are not secured by docked stairs or a hub truck, it is recommended that you attach the door strap and are secured by another person.

6 No Time to Lose – Before Passengers Board!



You know the situation. You have barely boarded yourself or the last passenger has just disembarked from the previous flight and already the stress begins. Things get very claustrophobic in the cabin. Cleaning staff are pulling trash bags and vacuum cleaners through the aisles, the catering crew is pushing large trolleys back and forth and the handling agent is already asking you when boarding can begin. In the galleys, trolleys and containers have to be lifted and moved around in the tightest of spaces. The captain is waiting for the security check, catering has to be checked and seat pockets may have to be replenished, magazines laid out and the computer reprogrammed.

Time is crucial to everyone, and that is why each and every person is focusing on their own job. These are ideal conditions for small careless mistakes which again and again result in accidents and injuries. In other words, anything that can help to ease this situation helps to prevent accidents.

Your contribution to accident prevention could be:

- Whenever possible, directing the cleaning and catering staff so that they do not both work in the same areas at the same time.
- Whenever possible, catering should be spread across several galleys so that



trolleys do not have to be pushed through the cabin.

- Do any work in the cabin before or after cleaning.
- Take a deep breath if everything seems to be coming down on you at once.
- Make sure that you take the breaks to which you are entitled according to EU-OPS/Q1.1130.

Seat pockets

Be kind to your back by sitting on the centre seat (if there are 3 seats in a row) or the aisle seat (if there are 2 seats in a row) to replenish the contents of the seat pockets. Have a careful look before putting your hand in the seat pocket. Make sure that you do not grab any sharp objects or put your hand in air sickness bags.

Hub trucks

Catering vehicles and other hub trucks are no-go areas for flight attendants! You can slip and fall. In addition, the safety guards are often not closed.

Disinfecting and disinsecting

Some countries require that aircraft are treated with insecticides before landing. Empty spray cans generally have to be presented as proof. The sprays used are all approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and do not present a health risk.

Nevertheless

- Avoid contact with the eyes.
- Do not spray in confined areas (e.g. lavatories).
- Never direct the spray towards anyone.

Airlines, in conjunction with company doctors and occupational health and safety experts, stipulate procedures for spraying. They also have to provide instructions regarding any possible risks and the necessary protective measures. If in doubt, ask someone!

Important aspects in brief: On the ground, it can become stressful in the aircraft cabin. Anything you can do to ease the situation helps to prevent accidents. Whenever possible, catering, cleaning and flight attendants should not work in the same place at the same time. Never set foot in a hub truck! Observe the instructions provided for disinsection and disinfection.

7 In the Galley and at the Trolley



No one knows better than you how cramped and even chaotic it can be in the galleys during the inflight service. So it is hardly surprising that many accidents occur as a result of regular work routines in the galley and the cabin. Here are a few examples:

“When I opened the meals trolley, a tray slipped out. When I was cleaning away the food and pieces of broken porcelain, I got a splinter in my ring finger on my right hand. I was unable to work for 21 days.”

“When I opened a container with Coca Cola bottles, a full 1.5 litre bottle fell on my little

toe from a height of 1.2 metres. The bruising meant that I had to be signed off work for 15 days.”

“As the trolley wheels were jammed, I had to move the trolley back and forth several times to take it out of the stowage position. As I did so, my thumb got jammed and my left hand twisted.”

“As I was pulling a trolley out of its stowage position, I cut my thumb on a piece of metal that was sticking out.”

“After the tea and coffee service, I went back to the galley, a pot in each hand, and slipped on the wet floor. I injured my coccyx and elbow.”

“As I was pushing the trolley through the cabin, it got caught on a blanket on the floor and tipped forwards. I tried to hold on to it and, in doing so, fell onto the trolley and sustained bruising to my entire upper body and legs.”

“During the meal service, I tripped on a newspaper that was lying on the floor. As a result, I bruised my lower legs and sprained my thumb.”

“I was carrying a juice tray through the aisle, slipped and injured my knee. To be precise, I bruised my knee and the joint stiffened.”

“After giving a passenger his drink, I hit my head on the ceiling as I stood up straight and suffered concussion.”

“I cut the middle finger of my left hand with the knife as I was slicing lemons.”

“Just as I wanted to begin serving the meal, the aluminium tray of hot food fell on my foot. The result was second degree burns.”

“The oven insert was jammed. I tried to use pressure to take it out and my index finger got caught. I later discovered that it was broken.”

“As I was opening a package of newspapers using a knife, I cut deep into the ball of my left thumb.”

“The MCD (curtain between Economy and Business) would not click into place and fell on my head. I suffered a head wound and the doctor diagnosed cranial contusion.”

What you can do to prevent accidents and injuries and to protect yourself:

- Use heat-resistant, protective oven gloves when handling hot items and also dry ice.
- Always close and latch boxes and trolleys.
- Never put any flammable items in an oven – not to warm them up and certainly not in order to put them away somewhere.
- Dispose of hot liquids from the coffee makers before every take-off and landing.
- Wipe up any spilled liquids immediately.
- Pick up blankets, newspapers and other items that are lying on the cabin floor.
- Use flashlights when checking the cabin and lavatories if the cabin is dark.

Pushing and pulling trolleys

You don't need to be told that trolleys can be extremely heavy and can fall over easily during turbulence. Moving them takes strength, skill and sometimes patience. If the wheels then block or you risk tripping over rucks in the carpet, it can be enough to try the patience of a saint.

BG Verkehr conducted a study into the special strain caused by pushing and pulling trolleys and found that the abovementioned conditions can result in overstrained muscles. The consequences can be tension in the shoulders and arms and lower spine which, in the worst cases, can be chronic.

As a result, the following recommendations have been made:

- Two crew members should move heavy trolleys.
- Begin the inflight service when the pitch angle is less than 5°. This requires clear communication between the cockpit and cabin crew.
- Pushing is always better than pulling.
- When pushing a trolley, using your foot can help.
- Galley shoes should have a heel no higher than 4 cm, should sit neatly on the foot, provide secure footing and have non-slip soles. It is more difficult to gather strength in high heels which do not offer enough stability. It is wise to have a second pair of shoes to interchange with the first pair, thereby varying the strain on your feet.



- If you are uncertain as to which movements are ergonomically ideal, ask for information or advice.

Pass on helpful tips to your colleagues.



Don't just think of service items but also procedures and operating controls which you consider to be potentially dangerous.

Many improvements in accident prevention can be attributed to suggestions and information from flight attendants. This is your chance to make your workplace safer – for yourself and for your colleagues.

Report faults

Report any faults which could cause accidents to your employer and the safety officer.

For example:

- twisted oven inserts,
- doors and hinged compartment doors that are jammed,
- faulty locks and latches,
- sharp edges,
- trolleys that are faulty or hard to steer and,
- hazardous parts of the aircraft floor which present a risk of stumbling.

Important aspects in brief: Many injuries such as cuts, burns, bruises and falls are caused by everyday work routines. You can reduce the risks by consistently using heat-resistant oven gloves and by handling hot liquids with care. It is better to push than to pull trolleys, preferably together with another colleague and when the pitch angle is no more than 5°. Wear shoes that provide a firm footing and are non-slip. Any faults in the cabin or with service material that could result in injuries should be reported to your employer.

8 Keeping up the Smile



It's not hard to smile, as they say. Well, maybe not, but maintaining a constant smile for hours becomes tiring. Particularly when your body is screaming for sleep and there is nowhere you can rest.

A smile here and there is something passengers can expect. Yes, indeed they can. But for flight attendants it means smiling at several hundred people and always being the centre of attention. It also means having full control over your own emotions – a friendly smile is expected even if it does not match what you are feeling inside. Some flight attendants do not find it difficult appearing friendly to the outside world without becoming emotionally

involved. However, switching oneself off to the feelings of other people means that you can become too distant from others, and ultimately lose touch with your own emotions.

Quirky, ironic or cynical remarks sometimes help relieve hurt feelings and can feel good at the time – letting off steam, in other words.

However, failure to regain a more positive outlook afterwards can result in a kind of contempt for people's emotions developing over the course of the years. Feeling contempt towards others and ultimately towards oneself is not good for anyone in the long run.



The strain caused by emotional stress can lead to psychosomatic symptoms and/or physical illness such as burn-out, anxiety and depression. Besides the enormous reduction in quality of life, the clinical patterns of these illnesses are also reflected in declining levels of attentiveness. The result is an increase in the number of accidents.

Mood-elevating pills, drugs and alcohol provide a quick escape but in the long term have proven to have harmful side effects and aggravate the problem. Consequently, the risk of accidents increases enormously.

There are no patent remedies and general success formulae for dealing with these issues. However, for the purpose of compiling this brochure, we asked colleagues who have been working as happy and healthy

cabin crew for many years for their strategies. Maybe there is something here that you would like to try.

“At yoga, I have learned breathing techniques which I consciously use on board in stressful situations. Sometimes, I retreat to a lavatory for few minutes for this purpose.”

“On every flight, I pick out one or two nice passengers with whom I deliberately have more contact. This has sometimes led to excellent chats which have been a lot of fun.”

“At some point in time, I realised that I needed to find a form of balance in my free time, an activity to which I can really be committed as a person. Since then I have been involved in a children’s home.”

“When I began flying, the world seemed to be so exciting and my friends at home so uninteresting. But I soon realised how important they are to me and made an effort to maintain contact, inviting friends home and travelling with them, even if I was sometimes tired.”

“When passengers complain because of delay or because they did not get their choice of meal, I first ask myself if it’s personal. If not, I try to put myself in their shoes and understand their anger and their needs. They usually calm down quickly then. However if

someone insults me personally, and thankfully that happens very rarely, I tell them that I feel personally affected. Most people then notice what they have done and apologize.”

“Having travelled around the world, I now find strength in hiking. I keep in mind the most stunning views from the mountains, with the smells, pictures and sounds. If it gets stressful in the cabin, I think about them and calm down.”

“When I have a really long day ahead of me, 12 hours or longer, I first imagine what would make me happy when I land. That is how I stay in a good mood.”

“I have tried autogenic training at home and in hotels. It helped but Jacobson’s progressive muscle relaxation techniques have proven even more helpful.”

Important aspects in brief: Strain caused by emotional stress to which flight attendants are subjected can result in psychosomatic symptoms and/or physical illnesses. Some ways of relieving the strain include yoga and other relaxation and breathing techniques, maintaining private contacts, walking and hiking, sport, doing someone a favour, spoiling yourself, using opportunities for retreat and focussing on positive experiences.

If a physical or mental state of exhaustion persists over a longer period, it is best to seek professional help.

9 Major Jitters



Fear of flying is a delicate and therefore often taboo topic in flight attendant circles. Many of those affected are concerned that their managers and colleagues will not take them seriously or will dismiss them. They grit their teeth and struggle from flight to flight. As with any form of fear, a fear of flying seriously restricts one's level of perception and cause result in accidents. Moreover, if it is not treated, a fear of flying can lead to inability to fly for flight attendants. That is why it is wise not to turn a blind eye to the first signs of fear of flying. Instead, take active steps as early as possible, as anxiety-based illnesses can be successfully treated by behaviour therapy.

Fear of flying can be triggered by heavy turbulence, technical problems or incidents with passengers. Even media reports about crashes or terrorist attacks as well as car accidents and deaths among family and friends can trigger a fear of flying.

The following reports are from three flight attendants who tell of their suffering. We would like to start by mentioning that all three are flying again because their fear of flying was successfully treated in therapy.

"After maternity leave, I never felt quite at ease flying. During take-off, the palms of my hand became damp and my legs began to

shake. I would suddenly have panic visions which caused my heart to start beating loudly and faster although I tried to conceal all these signs. Then at some point, we had a fire warning on board. I was in such a state afterwards that the purser asked me about my condition. I pretended everything was fine. The anxiety attacks became more frequent and stronger and sometimes I had to call in sick. Some two years later, I had a panic attack on board during a flight and I had to admit to myself that I was suffering from a fear of flying.”

“Due to heavy turbulence, we had to abort our approach into Athens twice. I was seated on a three-seat row of an A321. The lady next to me was holding onto me so tightly that my arm hurt. I could not forget the fear-ridden expression on her face. That is when I also lost control. Shortly before this, I had experienced two other aborted take-offs within a short period of time. I had to call in sick and when I was at home, I could not stop crying. That night I contacted the CISM team and the following day I told my manager. Everyone took great care of me and helped me to find advice and therapy.”

“I just seemed to attract bad luck – aborted landings, hydraulic system failures, extremely hard landings with whiplash and an aborted take-off. However, the final straw came on a Washington flight. The pilots had to abort the approach due to the heavy thunderstorm over the airfield. A father with two children

begged me to do something. The feeling that I could not do anything for him was the worst feeling ever. Throughout the following weeks, just looking at the uniform sent me into a panic attack. But I wanted to carry on flying and clutched at every straw available to me – CISM, social services and psychologist.”



To prevent it going that far, psychologists and trauma experts advise seeking help immediately after any incident such as a life-threatening illness on board, the death of a passenger, situations that are not easily controlled due to alcohol or drug abuse, aggression and physical violence as well as any extreme flight incidents. Sometimes the entire crew may be affected and at other times it may be individual employees.

The decisive factor is what you yourself perceive to be threatening, extremely stressful or anxiety-provoking. Set your own standards and do not live by those of other crew members!

Many airlines have set up so-called CISM teams (CISM = Critical Incident Stress Management) which are an initial point of contact offering peer-level support. The CISM

care network has existed for German airlines since 1998. Stiftung Mayday took the lead in training and coordinating CISM teams. More than 300 workers are available via a hotline round the clock.

If a fear of flying has manifested itself, you should either seek outpatient care from an authorised therapist or alternatively inpatient treatment (e.g. at the Psychosomatic Clinic in Bad Dürkheim). The latter has doctors, therapists and psychologists who are specialised in this field and are familiar with the work environment of flight attendants. They have applied this specialised knowledge to develop concepts which are tailor-made to treat the fear of flying.

Important aspects in brief: Even flight attendants can suffer from a fear of flying. It can occur as a result of a stressful incident or can develop slowly and gradually into a problem. Experts advise seeking help and treatment as quickly as possible after any anxiety-provoking incident. If a fear of flying persists, behaviour therapists and clinics can help.



Insurance cover abroad

For an accident to be deemed work-related, it must be clear that the cause of the accident can be attributed to a work-related activity. This also applies to work-related stays abroad.

For example: If you sprain your ankle getting out of the crew bus, BG Verkehr will pay any costs that arise. If however you yourself arrange a trip with a bus during a layover and injure yourself getting out of the bus, or if you get bitten by a fish when diving (it has happened!), BG Verkehr is not liable.

It is therefore wise to find out about additional insurance coverage if, for instance, you take part in sports which are higher risk.

Risk of accidents abroad

Unfamiliar footways, foreign customs, unusual (traffic) regulations and other safety standards are just a few of the reasons for a higher risk of accidents abroad, particularly in road traffic. Fatigue, driving on the other side of the road and all the distractions of a strange new environment increase the risk potential even more.



If you want to come home with all your bones intact, we recommend:

- Only rent a car from a reputable company which guarantees acceptable safety standards and offers fair insurance coverage in the event of damage. Conflicts and disputes are also more easily resolved if the rental contract for a vehicle is subject to German contract law.
- Always wear a seat belt even if it is not legally required or not customary locally.
- Before setting off, find out about local traffic laws and acquaint yourself with regional customs.
- If you are exhausted, suffering from jet lag or the climate takes its toll on you, it is smarter to use public transport or take a driver.

- If you are out walking, it may be a good idea to carry a flashlight, depending on the country and the time of day, since building sites, potholes and other obstacles are not always secured as well as we are used to in Germany.

In the hotel

If a fire breaks out, every second literally counts for getting to safety. You must:

- Familiarise yourself with the escape route as soon as you arrive at the hotel.
- Take note of where the nearest fire extinguisher and fire alarm are located.
- Make sure that your suitcase and bags are not blocking your escape path!
- A flashlight can be a good idea at night – presuming it is lying on the bedside table.

Some crew members who have experienced an authentic fire alarm in a crew hotel now carry a smoke hood. This is a good idea since fire hoods provide protection against toxic fumes and caustic smoke, as we know from our fire-fighting practice.

If you notice any structural or design features in the hotel which could cause accidents, please inform your airline immediately.

In this way, you can help in the choice of another hotel.

Other countries – other illnesses

Tropical regions in particular are home to germs which do not exist in Europe. That is why our bodies do not possess any antibodies against them and the risk of becoming infected is high.

For this reason, you should always be vaccinated as required before travelling to any of these regions. For some countries, certain vaccinations, such as yellow fever, are required by law. Your employer and occupational doctors will be able to provide you with competent information about the risks of infection and precautionary and prophylactic measures.

Moreover, irrespective of their home base, every flight attendant should have basic protection against hepatitis A, diphtheria, tetanus, polio and measles. An influenza vaccination is also advisable during the winter months.

The best means of protecting yourself against insect bites is by using an insect repellent which can be bought in any store. Make sure to rub it in well on areas that are not covered by clothing. Some mosquitoes can however bite through a thin layer of clothing (e.g. tights or stockings). Repellents will keep the nasty little creatures away from you for about eight hours. That is why reapplying is recommended before going to bed.

Your occupational doctors can provide advice about taking malaria prophylactics.

Diving and then flying

Some flight attendants take the opportunity to go diving during a layover. However, anyone who has trained as a scuba diver knows that there has to be at least 24 hours between surfacing and your departure. Otherwise, the risk of sustaining so-called “diver’s paralysis” is very high. The reason for this is the high nitrogen concentration in the blood after diving in combination with reduced cabin pressure.

Symptoms vary from dizziness, impaired vision, defective hearing and speech disorder to heart problems and loss of consciousness.



You can avoid this by:

- only diving when you are absolutely certain that you will not be assigned to return flight duty at short notice. Always allow at least 24 hours,
- observing a maximum dive depth of 30 metres (prescribed for scuba divers) and staying closer to the surface on the day before your flight,
- avoiding dives which require decompression,
- not going back for one more dive on the day prior to your flight.

Important aspects in brief: Insurance cover from BG Verkehr only applies abroad if an accident is directly related to a work-related activity.

In order to avoid accidents in road traffic, you should familiarise yourself with local rules and customs and have someone else drive if you are too tired.

In order to find your way to safety quickly in the event of a fire, acquaint yourself with the escape paths and the location of fire extinguishers and fire alarms. Flashlights and smoke hoods can increase your own safety.

When travelling to tropical regions, make sure that you have the correct vaccinations and take all recommended precautionary measures seriously.

If you are a diver, observe the 24-hour rule and avoid any particularly strenuous dives on the day before a flight.

11 Dreaming of a Good Night's Sleep



Nothing is quite as personal and individual as sleep. But one thing is certain – we all need our sleep to regenerate our bodies and minds. We are all familiar with the consequences of a lack of sleep – shivering, impatience, inability to make competent decisions, reduced memory capacity and concentration difficulties. The result is a higher risk of accidents.

However, with varying working times, often at ungodly hours, plus jet lag, getting enough sleep is not always easy. There are no patent recommendations for getting a good night's sleep, but sleep researchers recommend:

- Try not to have a long sleep during the day; at most, short power naps of no more than 20 minutes.
- Avoid heavy, fatty and acidic foods before bedtime.
- Also avoid coffee, tea or alcohol and don't smoke.
- Don't listen to loud, lively music before bedtime.
- Don't turn on the television if possible or at least avoid watching exciting, stirring movies or programmes.
- Make sure not to nap in front of the television.
- Don't do any sport directly before bedtime.

Now that you know what not to do, here are some bedtime tips from your colleagues.

"I listen to a children's story to help me fall asleep. I came across this recently and it works marvellously."

"A colleague gave me a 'Bedtime Trance' CD. They actually speak a load of rubbish but maybe that is why I always seem to fall asleep before the CD is finished."

"If I know that I have to go to bed early, I try to do lots of sport during the day. I am completely powered out but always allow myself at least two hours to relax afterwards."

"During short layovers, I always try to stay in German time despite the time difference, even though it means doing things at all the wrong times."

"I always take along valerian or lavender tea. Both work wonders for me."

"At some point in time, I realised that thinking 'I'll never fall asleep and just toss and turn in bed' had become a self-fulfilling prophecy. I learned in a seminar to tell myself that it is quite OK not to fall asleep straight away. It may sound stupid but since then the pressure is gone and I really do relax better and drop off to sleep."

"As I don't get a good night's sleep away from home, I make sure that I always go to bed and get up at roughly the same time at home and on my days off."

"Sometimes I can't fall asleep as my head is full of ideas or because I am planning the next day. That is why I have got into the habit of having a piece of paper and pen next to my bed to write down what is going through my head. Once I've written it down, I know I won't forget it and I fall asleep more peacefully."

Maybe some of these tips might help you. However, if you suffer from problems falling asleep and staying asleep over a longer period or if you wake up very early on a regular basis, you should contact a specialist doctor or attempt to find the reason for the problem at a special sleep clinic and discuss measures and treatment with the doctors.



The human ear is a small miracle. It can hear the quietest of sounds such as the buzzing of a mosquito but also the sound of engines. Information that is received is transmitted to the brain where it is decoded. Unfortunately, our brains do not give us a reliable signal, warning us that our ears are at risk from certain levels of noise. Unlike the eyes, our ears do not close automatically when the strain is too much.

In addition, the ear can adapt to noise levels. You possibly know people who live next to a railway track but say that they simply do not hear the trains any more. In tests, flight attendants seated in a training room were

played tapes with actual levels of noise. Most were very surprised at the volume. The problem is that the damage caused by noise remains even after the human being has grown accustomed to, and no longer perceives, the level of noise. Unnoticed, the sound waves destroy the fine sensory hairs in the inner ear's auditory cell and cause irreparable damage. Human beings do not notice the damage until it is too late. In addition, the ear does not distinguish between unpleasant noise and noise to which human beings voluntarily subject themselves – for instance, the beat from loudspeakers or music received via an earpiece. One night in a club with loud music is roughly the same as



40 hours' occupational noise exposure without ear protection. How often would you subject your ears to that?

Sound waves do not only damage the ear itself. They can also cause headaches, higher blood pressure, sleep disorders and anxiety. Bioacoustics specialists now also assume that noise has a negative effect on the cardiovascular and immune systems.

So, if you want to hear mosquitoes in future before they bite, remember to protect your ears – at work and in your free time.

High noise levels on the apron

BG Verkehr has been involved in extensive studies of the effects of exposure to noise for flight attendants. It was found that the noise from engines, auxiliary power units (APUs) and ground equipment on the apron can exceed 85 decibels dB(A). Noise levels above 85 dB(A) can result in long-term damage to the ear. That is why the use of ear protection

is prescribed even if you are only subjected to noise for a few minutes.

- Always have your ear plugs at hand and always use them on the apron, even for just a few moments.
- When you are on board, close the aft doors if possible and keep the noise out.

Noise protection all day at work

In order to analyse the levels of noise to which our ears are subjected at work, all the noises we hear in a day have to be evaluated. The above-mentioned study also endeavoured to analyse the daily noise exposure (in other words, the total level of noise pollution) for flight attendants. This was a difficult task given the variety of aircraft types and different shift patterns. After completing their calculations, the experts concluded that the "shift average" can exceed 80 dB(A). For this reason, employers are required to provide ear protection for an entire working day and also provide their employees with



information about noise exposure and its consequences. Moreover, an occupational doctor must be available to offer advice and precautionary tips and to answer questions pertaining to the dangers and stress caused by noise pollution. Ask the expert if you would like more exact details.

Ear protection

Developing ear protection which flight attendants can use at work all day requires squaring the circle of filtering out disturbing, damaging elements of noise whilst, at the same time, ensuring that flight attendants can still converse with passengers and colleagues and hear acoustic signals such as call buttons. Too much ear protection can therefore be perceived as restrictive and may not be used for that very reason. In some cases, it can even be dangerous if flight attendants cannot hear instructions from their colleagues or “suspicious” sounds. Ear protection for flight attendants also has to be visually appealing.

On the basis of these requirements, experts have developed skin-coloured ear plugs that provide mild noise insulation and still enable voice frequencies to pass through. Your employer is required to provide you with this form of ear protection.

Surveys have shown, however, that many flight attendants do not use the ear plugs during a flight as they have an unpleasant feeling of pressure in their ears. Nevertheless, we urgently advise you to protect your ears with ear plugs, at least in the take-off and descent phases.

The extent to which the ear plugs actually protect your ears depends very much on whether they are inserted correctly. Reading the instructions on the packaging carefully is therefore a wise move.

So-called “otoplastics” may be an alternative for flight attendants who have problems with the regular ear plugs. They are tailor-made and also filter out harmful noise levels. They are however more difficult to insert

in the auditory canal and are considerably more expensive.

That is why most airlines will only pay for them in exceptional and strictly justifiable circumstances (e.g. if they are prescribed by a doctor).

If you have any questions or problems, you can ask your occupational health and safety officer or occupational doctor.

Important aspects in brief: The ear is a sensitive organ that has to be protected from noise. The highest levels of noise on the apron can exceed 85 dB(A) which is why ear protection should always be used. Average noise levels during a working day exceed the lower limit of 80 dB(A) above which ear protection is required. That is why employers are required to inform their employees about noise pollution and provide ear protection. Long-term protection for your ears from damage is only guaranteed if you use ear protection consistently and correctly. If you have any questions, ask your occupational doctor.

13 Eating Well, Staying Healthy



The importance of healthy eating was no doubt drummed into you by your parents who fed you spinach because it “contains so much iron”. But you may also have wondered if there is such a thing as healthy sugar. Perhaps you have asked yourself if eating late in the evening makes you fat, if muesli is always healthy or if spinach really does contain all that iron.

Giving energy to your body

The most important sources of energy for our body are fat and carbohydrates. Approximately half of our food should contain carbohydrates, preferably starch carbohydrates.

These are found predominantly in cereals, bread, rice, noodles, potatoes, corn, pulses and oats. If you really want to treat your body, eat wholemeal products whenever possible as they contain more vitamins, minerals and trace elements than white flour products and also have a higher fibre content. Why is fibre good for us? Quite simple – it fills us up for longer and improves digestion.

Muesli is not always muesli

Muesli is healthy if it comprises cereal, fresh fruit and yoghurt or milk. However, many muesli products often contain dried fruit and



as such a lot of sugar. The health content of cornflakes, sugar pops, rice crispies etc. is much worse as they are made up of up to 66% fat and sugar.

Sugar

Why do we always grab for chocolate, cake and sweets even though we know that sugar is unhealthy? There are biological reasons for this as a sweet taste tells the body that food is on its way to the stomach, giving us a calming feeling. The problem today is more that goodies containing sugar are available virtually everywhere. Unfortunately we have to disappoint those of you who thought that brown sugar and fruit sugar are less harmful. “Brown” sugar is simply granulated sugar that has been coloured with syrup. Fruit sugar or fructose is 100% sugar, despite the fact that advertising campaigns play on the idea that getting your sugar from fruit is healthier.

In other words, eat as little sugar as possible but when you do, enjoy it!

Fat

Fat is essential for our survival. The German Nutrition Society recommends consuming approximately 70 grams of fat per day. Reaching this level of consumption is easier than you might think. One bar of chocolate or 100 grams of crisps will do it! A distinction is made between vegetable fats with a high level of unsaturated fatty acids and animal fats. In order to prevent becoming overweight and suffering from cardiovascular diseases, you should eat more vegetable fats such as rapeseed oil, olive oil and sunflower seed oil and less butter, lard, fatty cheese and sausage.

Vitamins and minerals

You have probably seen slogans telling you to eat more fruit and vegetables per day because they’re good for you. And the advertisements are correct! You should eat fruit and vegetables several times a day, preferably two portions of fruit and three portions of vegetables. This may not always be easy when you are flying but your body will thank you for it. Fruit and vegetables contain many vital vitamins and minerals, are high in fibre and also low in calories.

Vitamin products are meant to supplement your regular intake and cannot compensate for a low-vitamin diet. Most of the promises made by dietary supplement product advertisements are extremely controversial.

Protein and iron

The body needs protein for its cell structure and metabolic processes. Milk, yoghurt, cheeses, cream cheese and also meat products contain protein. As the latter also have a higher fat and cholesterol content, eating meat and sausage no more than two or three times per week is recommended. Pulses, soya and corn contain valuable vegetable proteins.

The body needs iron to transport oxygen and to form blood. Cereals and meat as well as pulses have a high iron content. The assumption that spinach contains lots of iron is simply down to a wrong decimal point!

Fluids

Adults need approximately 2.5 litres of fluids a day, 1.5 to 2 litres of which should be consumed in the form of beverages. The remaining quantity is found in food. Any amount of fluid over and above this quantity is an unnecessary strain on our kidneys. In hot weather or if you are sweating from doing a sport, you should of course drink more. A healthy guideline is one litre for every hour of sport.

You can treat your body with water, juice spritzers and unsweetened herbal and fruit teas. Fizzy drinks are best avoided as they contain lots of sugar and very little nutrients.

Tips for eating healthily when you are flying:

- Eat salad with vinegar and oil dressing as often as possible in restaurants and canteens.
- Take potatoes, rice or noodles instead of French fries.
- Low-fat soft cheese desserts and fruit salad are healthier than chocolate mousse and cake.



- If you need to eat quickly, have a filled whole-grain bread roll, kebab, falafel or sushi rather than a fatty pizza or curried sausage.
- For those moments when you need energy quickly on board, keep dried fruit, nuts or fruit slices to hand.

And on the subject of cancelling dinner

Many diet plans tell you not to eat anything after 6 p.m. as the calories you consume

shortly before going to bed are the ones that make you fat especially quickly. This theory has now been proven to be wrong as the body digests food at the same rate regardless of whether you are asleep or awake. So, never eating in the evening could mean that you miss out on some lovely evenings with friends.

Important aspects in brief: Eat plenty fruit and vegetables, preferably five times a day! Cereals and cereal products as well as potatoes and rice fill you up and contain important vitamins and fibre. Every kind of sugar is unhealthy and should be consumed sparingly. 70 grams of fat is enough for the body every day, preferably vegetable oils. Milk and dairy products should also be included in your daily menu; meat and sausages should only be eaten two to three times a week.

The body's fluid requirements are generally met by 1.5 to 2 litres per day, preferably water, herbal and fruit teas as well as fruit juice spritzers. Keep a supply of dried fruit, nuts and sliced fruit in your travel bag.

14 Strong, Fit and Agile



The human body is made to move a lot. As a flight attendant, you benefit from the fact that you do not have sit down all day at work. Nevertheless there are plenty of good reasons why you should partake in sporting activities as it has been proven that people who do sports on a regular basis are at far less risk of suffering from:

- back pain and slipped discs,
- osteoporosis,
- cardiovascular problems (e.g. high blood pressure),
- diabetes,
- sleep disorders,
- heart attack and strokes.

If only we did not have to overcome our not-so-sporty, weaker self which always helps us to find “good” excuses. Which of the following prospects would help you to tempt your weaker side into the gym, onto the ski slopes or into the forest?

As you get older, would you still like to:

- scale new heights with ease,
- dance the night away,
- attract admiring glances with your sporty figure,
- be full of ideas and joie de vivre,
- feel comfortable with yourself,

- get compliments on your appearance and your fitness levels,
- resist infections,
- stay at your desired weight, and
- have a strong back?

You should start tomorrow, or the day after at the latest – or do you really want to let another day slip by?

You should choose a type of sport that you enjoy, that makes you feel good both as you do it and particularly afterwards and, of course, one that fits into your lifestyle.

It is of course not always easy for flight attendants to be able to adhere to regular times. However you might be able to find colleagues with whom you can meet to go walking, jogging, skating or biking. Many yoga studios offer various courses during the week and some offer 10-visit passes. How about spending your next vacation adventurously canoeing, biking through beautiful countryside or hiking across mountains and hills rather than lying on the beach not being very active?

Roughly 50% of your personal fitness programme should improve your conditioning (cardio), 40% your strength (power) and 10% your agility. Ideally you should do some sport two to three times a week.

Strength

When many of you think of power training you probably picture Arnold Schwarzenegger and other body builders whose bulging biceps make them look somewhat unhealthy. Maybe that is why body building did not have a very good image until just a few years back. It is a fact however that your joints are thankful for the support and relief provided by your muscles, for instance, to your knee. If the muscle is weakened at the knee, every step has a direct effect on the joints and bones and can result in signs of wear. The same principle applies to the many large and small muscles in the back which, if trained regularly, protect the spine from injury if you make sudden movements. Exercises that strengthen the back are therefore the best precaution against and therapy for back pain.

In addition to supporting your skeleton, power training also serves to strengthen bones and protect from osteoporosis.

Your personal training programme should include elements which strengthen your leg, back, stomach, shoulders and arm muscles. Gyms which recommend exercises and help you to ensure the correct movements generally provide very effective power training. Many of these exercises do not require additional weights and can be done in (virtually) any hotel room. You will find lots of ideas and suggestions in innumerable books on the subject as well as on health insurance company web sites.

By the way, sore muscles do not mean that your muscles are developing. They are a sign that you have overdone it during training. Sore muscles are caused by micro-injuries to the muscle fibre and over-acidification of the muscles which you can avoid by gradually increasing your training workload and beginning slowly and/or with less weight after longer breaks.

Endurance

So you are not the type of person who likes to run a marathon? That is not a problem as it is not in the slightest bit necessary for your own personal fitness level. Working up a light sweat in a 30 to 60 minute session of physical activity once or twice a week is quite enough. You can vary your programme to include jogging, walking, biking, swimming, rowing, skating, playing ball or whatever else you enjoy. There are so many positive benefits to improving your level of endurance that we cannot even list them all here. Your circulation will improve, your blood pressure will be lowered and you will be protected against germs and infection. You can also benefit mentally from endurance training – more serotonin, the happiness hormone, is produced. This will lift your mood and ease anxiety. In addition, your concentration levels and stress capacity will also improve.

Jogging or walking?

People who march through the forest swinging their sticks may look funny, but walking is in fact very good for you! Joggers burn



more calories but walkers who put in the same effort lose more weight and also protect their joints. Walking is particularly well-suited to people who are not well-trained and are carrying too much weight. Before you start training, speak to your doctor about your personal limits, especially if you have high blood pressure.

If you decide that you would prefer to jog, you should begin by alternating between running and walking and only run at a speed at which you are still able to hold a conversation without difficulty. If you enjoy jogging, buy yourself a pair of good shoes. They do not need to be the most expensive but they have to be right. Many sports stores can analyse your feet to find the right shoe.

If you need to have the company of others to motivate you to run, you will find that many cities have set up runner's meetings which



anyone can join. Sports associations in Germany also offer regular runs without the need to join the club.

Agility

Many recreational athletes include stretching exercises in their programme when they are warming up and cooling down. This is very effective as it ensures that the muscles relax. In addition, stretching also improves your overall agility and can ease tension (e.g. in the neck and shoulder area). That is why

relaxation techniques such as yoga and the Feldenkrais method include many stretching exercises.

Many people's leg muscles shrink over the courses of the years and flexibility in the spine is reduced as it is used less on a day-to-day basis. The good news is that a little training can help you regain your youthful agility. In general, every muscle can be stretched but never exceed your personal pain threshold.

Important aspects in brief: People who do sport on a regular basis can reduce their health risks and improve their quality of life. If you have avoided sport until now, it is worthwhile having a look at the list in this chapter to find out what could motivate you to be more active. In the interests of your health, you should take part in a sporting activity two to three times a week and develop both your strength and endurance. Remember to work on your agility as well and not to overdo it at first! Have fun!



**Berufsgenossenschaft Verkehrswirtschaft
Post-Logistik Telekommunikation
(German Social Accident Insurance
Institution for commercial transport,
postal logistics and telecommunication),
known as BG Verkehr for short. (We refer
to these institutions as BGs.)**

When the institutions for statutory accident insurance and prevention were first established in Germany, people only dreamed of flying. These were the days of Otto von Lilienthal's first attempts at gliders with wooden wings covered with fabric and the age of the first factories. Working conditions were often perilous – steam boilers exploded, hot

fluids leaked and cutting machines were not safe. If employees suffered any injuries, they were not financially covered and the loss of their job meant the loss of their means of existence.

These conditions prompted Bismarck to pass the Accident Insurance Act and set up accident insurance and prevention associations in 1884. Since this date, German employers have been required to have and pay for accident insurance for each of their employees with the relevant BG. In return, employers are protected from legal disputes in the event of work-related accidents and illnesses as these are addressed by the BGs.

Half of the members on all committees and

executive boards are employer representatives and half are employee representatives.

Responsibilities of the institutions for accident insurance and prevention:

1. Preventing accidents at work and on the way to and from work as well as occupational diseases and work-related illness

In this matter, the BG fulfills its responsibilities by:

- advising companies on safety-related issues and providing them with information,
- training managers, safety officers and specialists in occupational health and safety,
- issuing regulations for the prevention of industrial accidents,
- supervising the implementation of required measures for health and safety protection,
- initiating research into occupational health and safety, accident prevention and occupational diseases, and
- ensuring a transfer of know-how between the world of research and the world of practical work.

2. Insurance benefits in the event of work-related accidents and illnesses

Work-related accidents

If an insured employee is injured at work or on the way to or from work, the institution for accident insurance and prevention pays for

treatment with all the required resources and supports him financially with industrial injury benefit. If the insured party is unable to work on a permanent basis and further medical treatment does not promise any success, they receive an income-related pension.

If you have a work-related accident (which we hope will never happen), see an accident insurance doctor who can ensure the highest quality of treatment. In addition, report the accident to BG Verkehr as quickly as possible. Forms are available from your employer.

All work-related accidents must be reported to the relevant institution for accident insurance and prevention if

- you are unable to work for more than three days as a result of the accident,
- the accident results in medical treatment expected to last longer than one week, and
- the accident requires prescriptions for medicine and medical equipment.

Please also notify BG Verkehr if your health problem recurs as the result of an accident.

Occupational diseases

BG Verkehr will also provide financial assistance if you suffer from an occupational disease. However, the procedure required to prove beyond any doubt that the disease or illness is caused by your work environment is long and time-consuming. It is often

unpleasant for the person concerned and not always easy to understand why medical experts need to research the records relating to the illness as well as other occupational and private activities. In such cases, we can only ask you to be patient.

16 Further Details

For further details about occupational health and safety in the aviation industry, kindly refer to www.bg-verkehr.de (German language website), and select the information for the Aviation Sector, or contact the relevant regional or branch office in Germany:

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