

PRE FLIGHT

Prepare ahead to stop plane cabins playing havoc with your skin

TOP UP YOUR OMEGA 3

In the UK, humidity in the air tends to range from about 60-80%. At 30,000 feet (the average altitude for most flights), humidity in an aircraft cabin drops to about 12% – drier than most deserts. To avoid skin that looks like a worn emery board, start taking omega 3 supplements (Solgar Triple Strength Omega-3, £24.29 for 50 [3], is good) two weeks before you fly. "Fortifying your skin with these essential fatty acids will prevent moisture escaping from the skin's outermost layer," says cosmetic dermatologist Dr Sam Bunting.

USE SHEET MASKS

To prepare yourself for a moisture-less cabin, apply a sheet mask every day in the week before take-off. You'll saturate your skin with far more nourishing ingredients than you would from a regular jar of moisturiser as the fibre sheets are doused in an intensely hydrating serum. "When you place the mask on the face it traps the serum on top of your skin," says facialist Nichola Joss. "This decreases water evaporation and also increases the temperature of your skin, encouraging the hydrating serum to be absorbed more thoroughly." Givenchy's Hydra Sparkling Fresh and Fast Masks, £39 [2], contain hyaluronic acid, which is proven to hold 1,000 times its own weight in water on the skin.

ALKALISE YOUR BODY

The body is always trying to maintain a pH of 7.365, which is slightly alkaline. But the stress of travel can cause you to produce the acidic hormone cortisol, which weakens the good bacteria in your gut and can cause inflammation. "Two to three days before you fly, swap your espresso for a cup of warm water with fresh lemon juice, which changes from acidic to alkaline when metabolised by the body, to keep the gut in balance," says facialist Debbie Thomas.

TAKE ANTIOXIDANTS

The earth's atmosphere thins out above cloud level, meaning the

sun's rays are significantly stronger (a new study by the University of California has found that airline pilots face the equivalent of 20 minutes on a sunbed after an hour in the cockpit). "If you're departing or arriving in daylight, wear an SPF30+ and pop a double dose of antioxidant supplements two hours before your flight to help protect against the cell-damaging effects of UV rays from the inside out," says Margo Marrone, pharmacist and founder of The Organic Pharmacy. Studies show that antioxidants become more powerful when combined, so try her Superantioxidant capsules, £45 for 60 [1], a potent blend of vitamins A, C and E.



ON BOARD

Prevent your body being thrown out of balance

REPAIR DNA

Flying disrupts your circadian rhythm – the body clock that tells you when you should be awake and when you should sleep. This directly affects the skin's natural healing process, warns dermatologist Dr Ronald Moy. "DNA repair in our skin occurs in the afternoon and evening so these sensitive processes are likely to be interrupted when we're changing time zones." Slather on a moisturiser containing DNA-repair enzymes with a liberal hand to dodge the worst damage. It's pricey, but DNA Renewal's new Regeneration Serum, £85 [2], is based on Nobel prize-winning research and contains enzymes

from marine plankton proven to boost skin DNA repair.

TAKE PROBIOTICS

As you take off, the air pressure in the cabin begins to decrease. This disturbs your digestive bacteria, slows down your metabolism and causes the gases in your intestines to expand by up to 30%. "Altitude and a reduction in pressure causes the colon to expand, and as we become more dehydrated, there is less water in the digestive tract so food doesn't digest as well, resulting in bloating," explains Thomas. Take a probiotic supplement such as Terranova Probiotic Complex With Prebiotics, £26 for 100 [3] to strengthen your gut and reduce acidity.

AVOID ALCOHOL AND CAFFEINE

Both alcohol and caffeine are stimulants that prevent you from sinking into slow-wave sleep – the deeper stages of sleep where your body releases human growth hormones to increase muscle mass, thicken skin and repair tissue. "If this function is impaired, skin looks fatigued, exaggerating

jet lag symptoms," explains Dr Bunting. As well as water, sip green tea: it is rich in antioxidants and has been scientifically proven to speed up your metabolic rate by 4% due to the high concentrations of fat-burning polyphenols.

INCREASE LUMINOSITY

Plane cabins are pressurised to simulate the conditions found at 7,000 feet – an altitude similar to the top of a mountain where there is less oxygen in the air. Blood oxygen levels drop to 93% – meaning fewer nutrients are carried from the arteries to the skin, making your face look dull. For immediate brightening, apply La Roche-Posay Redermic C10 Correcting Filler, £29.50 [1] – it contains 10% pure vitamin C and is like a lightbulb moment for skin.

STEER CLEAR OF SALT

The combination of dryness and low pressure reduces the

sensitivity of your taste buds to salty foods by around 30%. "Too much sodium, however, can cause water retention, leading to a puffy face and limbs," warns Joss. Avoid sprinkling more salt to make in-flight food less bland and snack on fruit and vegetable batons from the food tray rather than salted pretzels.

