

UniSport Australia Guideline

International Travel Tips

Preparing for travel

Research has shown that players who do not cope well with travelling frequently let themselves and their teammates down in crunch situations during competition. There are a number of things that can be done for both players and staff to ensure a successful trip as a team, individual player, and personally.

The key areas in preparing for departure are relaxation, diet, and making a psychological switch to the intended destination.

1. It is essential to be organised and ready
 - Make a list of clothes that need to be packed
 - Take at least one day off work before travelling, allowing quality time with family and friends before leaving
2. Try to reduce caffeine intake and alcohol consumption about 48 hours prior to departure.
3. Try to get to sleep early and take naps at corresponding times to your destination place, aiming to ease the effects of jet lag.
4. Substitute frequent carbohydrate snacks in place for at least one meal a day.

In-flight strategies

Some major concerns when travelling on planes are comfort, food, hydration, and rest.

1. If there is a morning arrival at your destination, then sleep the last leg of your flight so you don't want to sleep when you get there. Similarly, if you are arriving at night, then try to get some sleep at the start of your flight so you can sleep when you arrive at your accommodation. A good tip is to try and move around the cabin if possible, just to keep your muscles alive. In the event of doubt or the need to seek further clarification, the UniSport General Manager - International Program and National Leagues will speak to and seek advice from Senior Officers in DFAT/Smarrtraveller.
2. Drink lots of water and juice and avoid tea and coffee. Limit your alcohol consumption to one drink. The air in an aircraft has a dehydrating effect because it is dry, so avoiding caffeine and alcohol will assist in coping with the dehydrating effects. Similarly, restrict sugary drinks because they add significantly to the caloric intake.
3. As soon as you get on the plane, adjust your watch to the time in your destination country.
4. Many athletes prefer to reduce their food intake, aiming to get into the routine of eating at appropriate meal times in their destination country. Preferred foods include cereals, vegetables, and fruit. Take your own snacks on the plane that will help you eat appropriate foods.

5. Carry a toothbrush and other toiletries in your hand luggage to assist in maintaining personal freshness during the flight.
6. During designated waking times, according to the time of your destination country, many athletes like to walk around the cabin a bit to chat with others. Reading, and listening to music are other good options.
7. When the aircraft has stopped for a passenger pick-up, or re-fuelling, get out and have a walk around to refresh yourself.
8. Mentally switch off and put your mind in neutral when travelling. There is plenty of time for mental preparation when you arrive and begin competition.



Destination guidelines

The chief controllers for the body's natural biological clock are sunlight, sleep, eating, and exercise. To adjust to local time quickly, be disciplined about rest, sleep, and activity times.

1. Avoid sleeping for long periods in the middle of the day because this will slow down your adjustment to local time.
2. At night if you are having trouble sleeping, keep resting with perhaps small stints of writing, or reading, mixed with dozing.
3. Avoid drinking local water, drink bottled water, and avoid getting ice in your drinks.
4. When cleaning your teeth, do not use water directly from the tap.
5. Avoid salads if washed in local water, precooked cold foods, unpeeled fruit, exotic dishes, and seafood. It is safer to have freshly cooked hot food, or salad washed in sterile water.
6. It is wise to carry medication to assist with possible diarrhea, nausea, etc.
7. Stress can be controlled by playing card games, listening to music, reading, and doing some sightseeing.

Maximising performance at the World University Games

There are so many factors that can affect your performance when you compete at an Olympics or World Championships, or World Class Event.

Environmental stressors

1. Travel and its associated effects: common disturbances include sleep disruption, and/or inadequacy, depressed mood and vigour, and changes in motivation.
2. Lack of familiarity with the environment and services
 - Language
 - Climate
 - Transport
 - Accommodation
 - Security
3. Reduction in usual social support and the social environment of crowds: you are going to be removed from partners, family, and friends. Everyone with whom you usually turn to for support will be in another country, and unable to be there to assist with coping from day to day. The crowd will be against you, and very noisy for opposing teams. Are you prepared for that?

Factors directly related to competition

1. Transport or competition program delays: missed buses, etc. may cause anxiety prior to competition.
2. Lack of familiarity with the competition environment and procedures
 - Match scheduling
 - Access to facilities
3. Presence of media, crowds, top name competitors
4. Reactions of coaches and officials
5. The occurrence of aversive or unexpected events



Recommendations for minimising environmental stress and maximising performance

The figure below looks at the many aspects of the athlete and individual that need to be considered when travelling.

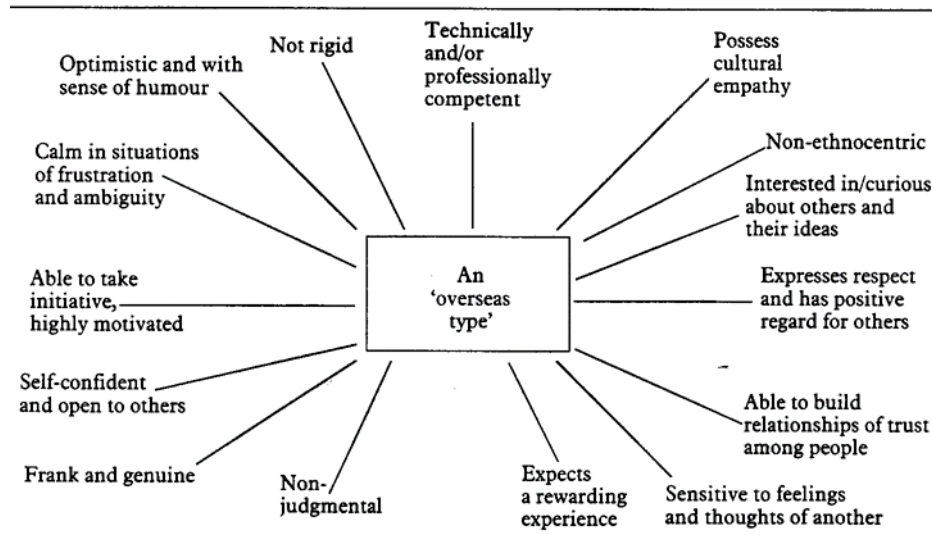


Figure 1 — Abstract profile of an “overseas type” (Craven, 1988b)

1. Familiarise yourself as much as possible with the culture, traditions, climate, people, crowd expectations and influence, venues procedures.
2. If you have concerns about anything prior to leaving, or while you are away, seek guidance, and assistance from coaches, sport psychologists, medical personnel, and teammates. Never sit on a problem because you think you can cope, use the resources around you.
3. Set yourself some personal goals. It may prove beneficial to discuss these goals with teammates, coaches, etc., in order to get feedback and assistance on achieving those goals and maximising performance.
4. Use your time alone wisely to relax, re-focus, and enjoy the experience.

