

erasmus+

LET U BUDUĆNOST

Održivost, digitalizacija i mentalno zdravlje
u zrakoplovstvu



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Obogaćuje živote, širi vidike



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AGENCIJA ZA
MOBILNOST I
PROGRAME EU



Fear of flying

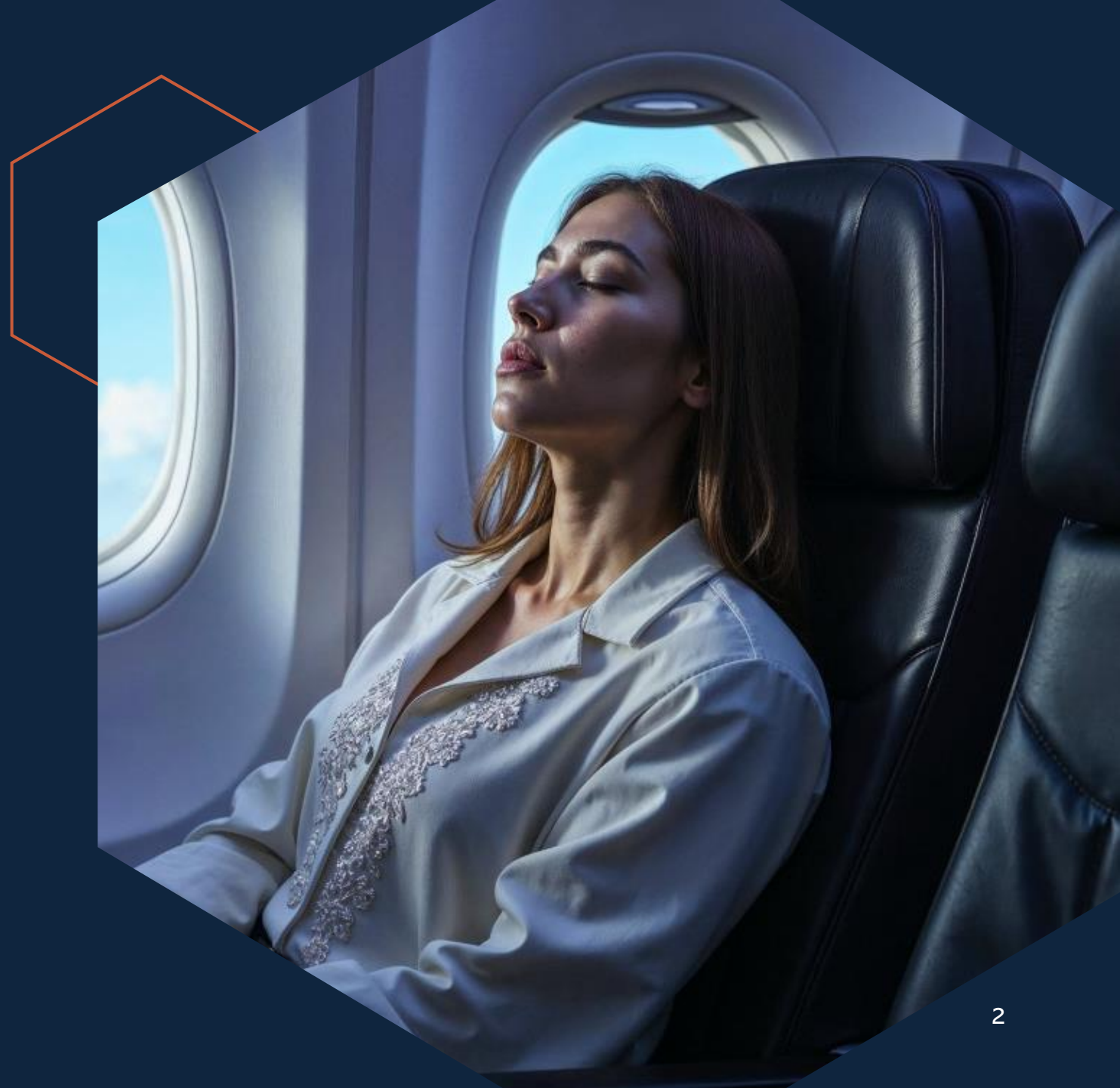
Una Marjanović, 3.ZP



1. Defining the Fear

Irrational Threat Response

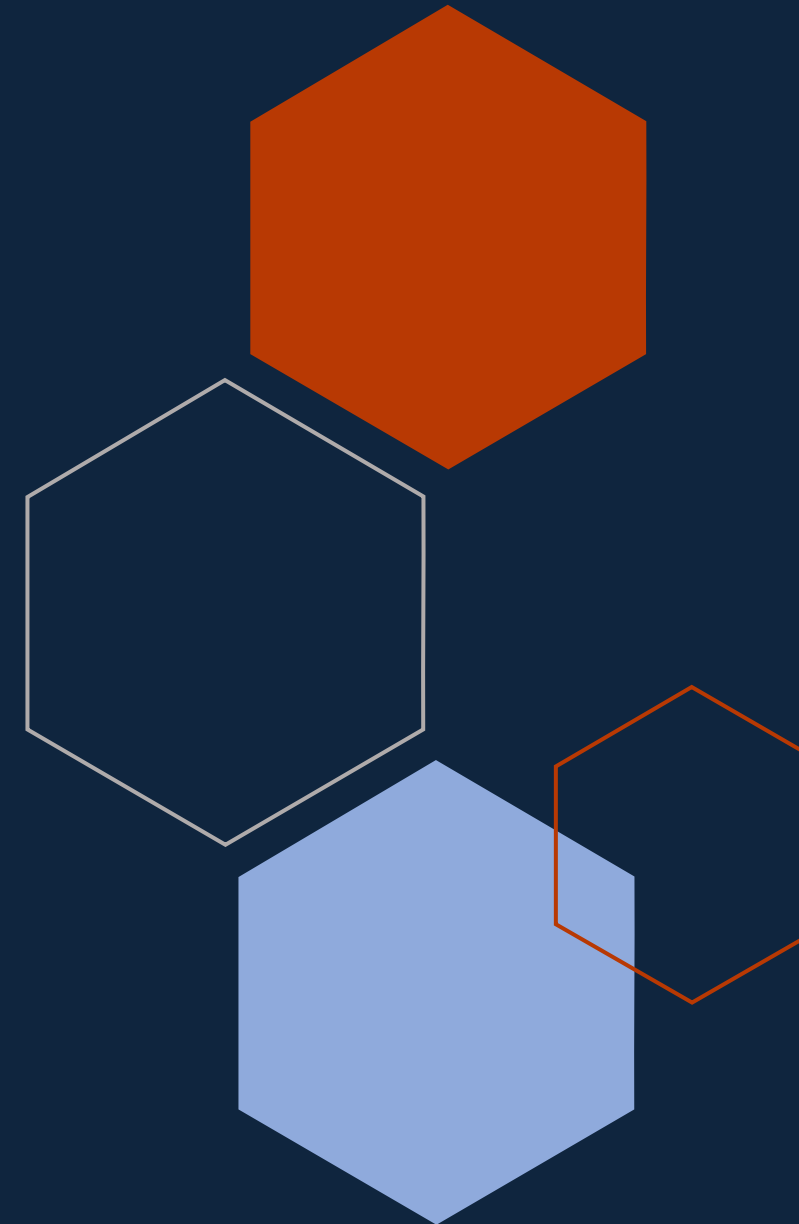
- the brain misinterprets the safe act of air travel as an immediate, life-threatening danger, prompting a high-alert anxiety state



2. Loss of Control



- unlike driving or walking, passengers on a commercial flight yield all situational control to the pilots and mechanics
- this perceived loss of autonomy triggers claustrophobia, heights, and deep-seated vulnerability



How common is it?

- clinical studies estimate that up to 18% of adults suffer from some degree of flight anxiety
- recognizing how widespread this phobia is serves as an important first step, helping to eliminate the feelings of isolation or shame that often accompany aerophobia



18%
of the Global Population



Key trigger factors



1. Atmospheric Turbulence

- sudden movements or altitude drops can instantly trigger the biological fight-or-flight response, even though planes are engineered to easily withstand them




2. Sensationalized Media

- highly publicized reports of rare plane accidents can skew risk perception, making the possibility of disaster feel much more probable than it statistically is
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3. Sensory Overload

- unfamiliar cabin sounds, pressure shifts, and confined spaces combine to create physical discomfort, which the anxious mind often translates into panic
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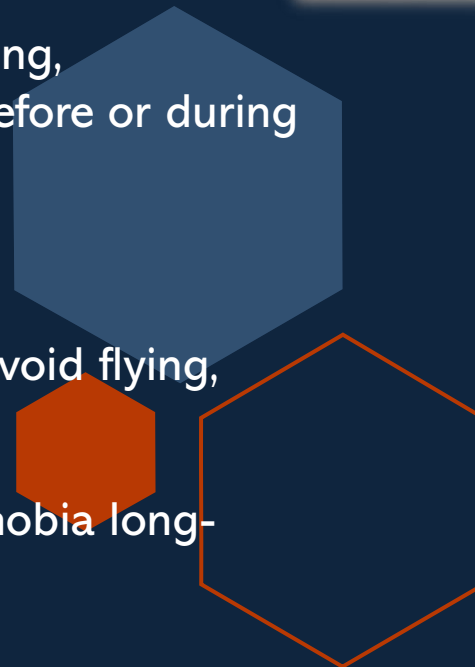
Signs & symptoms

Physical Signs

- adrenaline surges release cortisol, leading to immediate physiological changes
- common symptoms include rapid heart rate, heavy sweating, hyperventilation, dizziness, muscle tension, and nausea before or during takeoff

Behavioral Avoidance

- many sufferers actively arrange their lives to completely avoid flying, skipping distant business trips or family vacations
- this avoidance behavior reinforces and strengthens the phobia long-term



In-Flight relief

1. Deep Breathing

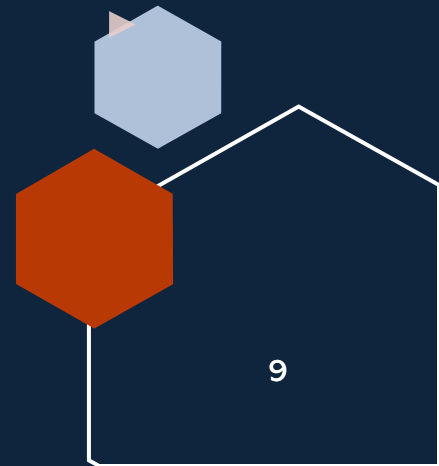
- regulate your nervous system
- inhale slowly for 4 seconds, hold for 4, and exhale for 4 to lower your heart rate and ease panic

2. 5-4-3-2-1 Rule

- acknowledge 5 visual cues, 4 physical sensations, 3 sounds, 2 smells, and 1 taste
- grounding yourself limits runaway future outcomes

3. Active Focus

- keep your cognitive load busy
- watch engaging movies, play a detailed puzzle game, or read to prevent the brain from over-analyzing noise



Safety of Air Travel



Knowledge is the ultimate defense against fear.
Cognitive distortions lose their power when challenged by factual evidence:

1 in 11 Million Odds

Statistically, commercial aviation is the safest transit in the world

Triple Redundancy

Planes possess multi-tier backup systems for engines, power, and controls

Elite Training

Commercial pilots undergo strict assessments and simulation drills twice a year



Overcoming phobia

1. Education

- learn aviation safety, mechanics, and why turbulence is structurally safe

2. CBT

- work with a therapist to reframe negative and catastrophizing thoughts



3. Exposure

- utilize virtual reality or airport visits to face fears step-by-step

4. Freedom

- fly comfortably and confidently using your built-in coping skills





Mindset shift

"Anxiety is always oriented toward future outcomes. Reminding yourself that you are safe in the present moment is the ultimate key to overcoming phobia."

— Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Principle

Interview with participants in the Erasmus project



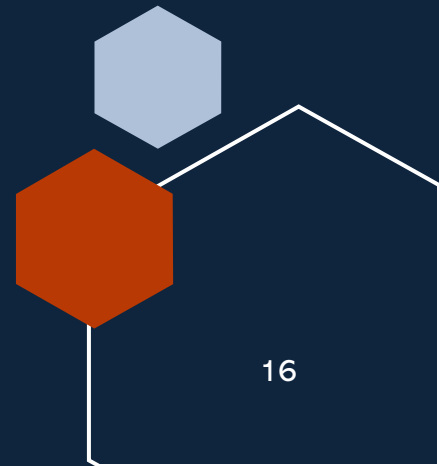
Video about Fear of flying



FEAR OF FLYING, ALSO KNOWN AS AVIOPHOBIA,
IS SOMETHING MILLIONS OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCE AROUND THE WORLD.
FOR SOME, IT'S A MILD DISCOMFORT.
FOR OTHERS, IT CAN FEEL OVERWHELMING
— A MIX OF ANXIETY, LACK OF CONTROL, AND FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN.

Literature

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Thank you for your attention!

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