

Ten Tips to Help Combat Jet Lag



1 For short trips, stay on home time

If you are away from home for only a day or two, try to eat when you would usually eat at home, try to sleep when you would usually sleep at home and try to not go outside when it is dark at home.

2 For longer trips, change your time as soon as possible

If you are away for more than two or three days, start using the time at your destination as soon as possible. Change your watch on the flight. Try to eat and sleep on the plane at times when you would eat and sleep at your destination. The earlier you start, the easier it will be.

3 Give yourself time

Remember that you will still have a “slump time” when your body is telling you that you would be asleep if you were at home. Adjusting to your new time zone usually takes at least 2 or 3 days.

4 Take short naps

While you are adapting to your new time zone, short naps may help you feel more alert and perform better. It is important that you sleep for no longer than 30 minutes and that you are awake for at least 4 hours before you go to bed.

5 Caffeine may be helpful but...

Do not overdo it. Tea and coffee can help improve alertness. Remember that they take about 20 minutes to have an effect, which then can last up to 4 hours. Do not have tea or coffee for at least 2 hours before going to bed.

6 Alcohol is not the solution

Although it may help you to get off to sleep, you will not sleep as well during the night.

7 Minimise use of sedatives and sleeping tablets

They can become a habit, giving you more problems than temporary jet lag.

8 Melatonin

This may help to re-set your body clock. Take it just before your planned sleep time.

9 Go outside

Take a walk. Sunlight is important to help your body adjust to the local time zone.

10 Do some exercise

This will help to revitalise when you arrive and reset your body clock. You should exercise during daylight hours, particularly in the early morning or late afternoon and not too close to bedtime.

This information is produced by:

Sleep Health Foundation

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A voluntary group offering assistance and support to people and their families living with sleep disorders

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The peak national association of clinicians and scientists devoted to investigation of sleep and its disorders

Disclaimer - Information provided here is general in nature and should not be seen as a substitute for professional medical advice.

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