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How to Deal with Jet Lag

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I find
that
even

dealing with the time difference of three hours upsets my natural rhythms for days. Jet lag is real and occurs any time you travel quickly across two or more time zones. The more time zones you cross, the more likely you are to be sleepy and sluggish. It's referred to as a temporary sleep disorder and can take up to a day for each time zone you cross for your body to adjust to the local time. If you are traveling east to west, jet lag could last four to five days. Jet lag is usually worse when you "lose time" traveling west to east. If you're an older adult, jet lag may hit you harder and recovery may take longer.

Other aspects of air travel can make things worse. Air cabins pressurized to 8,000 feet lower oxygen in the blood making passengers feel uncomfortable and dehydrated. If you don't move around as much as usual on a plane, the symptoms of jet lag can further disrupt your regular patterns.

There are many ideas for dealing with jet lag and who better to ask than a group of professional travel journalists. Here is a summary of the best ideas, certainly some I will be incorporating on my next transatlantic.

Timing

Adapt to your new schedule before you actually leave.

If you are traveling eastward, start moving bedtime earlier. Shift it a half hour earlier each night before several nights before you leave. Traveling west, do the opposite. Also try moving mealtimes closer to the time you'd be taking them at your destination.

Tim Johnson flies more time zones than anyone as a full time travel journalist whose home is in the air and he advises to: "Lean into it. Sleep when you can sleep and ease yourself later and later each night and if you can't sleep? Don't sweat it – just enjoy the all night movies or whatever."

I immediately set my watch to real time; directing the mind to think a little more clearly in a new destination helps.

Whenever I need to fly to a country far away and in a much different time zone, I always try to land in the evening, even if I have to pay a bit more. This way, I can stay up a few hours before hitting the hay, and my body will be on the new time-zone. They always say you should avoid going to sleep right when you land because you will never catch up. I can't possibly stay up for hours after landing, so this is the best way to do it!

Exercise

I swear by exercise as soon as possible after disembarking. I typically go for a run asap and it makes a world of difference. A run gives me a reset and is a great way to explore a new city.

Swimming in a pool or natural body of water helps.

Move around: periodically do some static exercises in your seat and stretch and walk around on the flight. I also get up on the plane and walk and stretch. I can feel a difference as compared to those times when I did not do so.

Sleep

I am not sure this is a pro tip but as I've been in 3 time zones in 4 days my trick has always been to live in the time zone I am in with frequent short naps when necessary. When I arrived in Portugal a couple of days ago I was still on Westcoast time. I stuck it out till 10pm Portugal time and then crashed the next day I was almost on local time.

For some reason, as long as I let myself sleep for about 13 hours straight when I arrive in a new place (so, stay up until 7 pm local time, wake at 8 am the next day), I'm good to go after that. May not work for everyone.

I also try adjusting my sleep schedule a few days before I arrive. So for example, my last trip to Barcelona, I forced myself to wake up at 6am (I usually wake up at 8am). It definitely helped and I didn't sleep in half as much! Also as tempting as it is, shut down at the end of the day! So many times I'd find myself curling up to go to sleep and then checking in on social media, only to find I was up until 2am with no signs of sleeping

Remedies

Many swear by Melatonin; apparently the Melatonin naturally in our bodies helps keep the circadian rhythms so that we sleep at night. There is no medical evidence that Melatonin supplement can combat jet lag and aid sleep, but many use it every time they fly.

It's the only time I use Melatonin to make sure my body sleeps at the right time. I usually pick up a little bottle in the airport. I sleep if my flight arrives in the morning, and I pull an all-nighter if my flight arrives in the evening. Since I started doing this I've almost never had jetlag after transatlantic flights. Also, not eating too much on the plane and timing your body to eat meals with your destination's time zone helps a lot.

I take a sleeping pill on a long overnight flight and because I rarely take them it seems to work – at least for 4 or 5 hours. Then I take Melatonin if needed for a few nights in either end of the trip

Ginger

The Canadian remedy homeopathy 'No jet leg' works.... otherwise I listen to my body.... quite a few journalists said this works every time for them and guarantees no jet lag!

I had a Vitamin IV infusion when I was in LA recently, just prior to a long-haul flight to Australia. Not only did I sleep on the plane (unheard of!) but no jetlag afterwards! An expensive way to deal with it, but it sure worked!

Other Ideas

I go to the spa. No joke. Most spas open early so even flights to Europe aren't half bad. A massage works wonders and it's one of the only places where no one bothers you if you look like you're sleeping

Fasting on the flight. Eating as little as you can right before and during (and avoiding lots of sodium) helps me adjust to my new time zone tremendously, as does eating at their normal meal times as soon as I arrive.

Hydration! At least eight ounces of water for every hour you're in the air. Helps big time. Drink a lot of fluids such as water or juice and avoid alcohol or caffeine a few hours before you plan to sleep.

Apps

Of course, there's also an app for jet lag:

<http://www.upliftnaturally.com/>



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