

Sleep, Travel, and Jet Lag

Jet lag can occur when people travel quickly across several time zones, which causes their internal biological rhythm to be out of sync with the new destination time. Sleep problems tend to be more common when people travel from west to east, because it is more difficult to advance than to delay sleep time.

Coping With Jet Lag

To avoid jet lag, it is important to adapt yourself to the routine of your destination's time zone as soon as possible. The following suggestions might help you avoid sleep problems when traveling:

- Several days before traveling, try to gradually adjust your sleeping habits to the destination time zone.
- As soon as you board the flight, reset your watch for the new time zone.
- While on board, control sleeping, including naps.
- Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. Dehydration makes it more difficult for the body to adjust to the new rhythm.
- Limit your sleep to no more than two hours immediately after arrival.
- Remember that daylight can help reset your internal "clock." Take a one-hour walk as soon as you get up in the morning.
- Avoid excessive caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco.
- Avoid social isolation.
- Practice good sleep habits while away.

Sleep and Travel

Many people have trouble sleeping in a hotel room or in a different environment than the one to which they are accustomed. These tips may help you sleep better when you are away from home:

- Bring along your own pillow and/or blanket. These may help you sleep more comfortably.
- Pack a few personal objects from home (for example, photographs or a coffee mug) to ease the feeling of being in a new environment.
- Check your room for potential sleep disturbances, including light shining through the drapes. Bring along a sleep mask to block out any light.
- Request a room in the quietest section of the property and make sure that the room is away from any entrance areas or elevators. Use a fan or other "white noise" to cut down sounds of hotel neighbors or street traffic.
- Check your room's thermostat. Your sleep can be disrupted if the room is warmer than 75° F or colder than 54° F.

WebMD Medical Reference

SOURCE:

[The National Sleep Foundation.](#)

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