

The Definitive Guide to Defeating

JET LAG

Advanced strategies for beating Jet Lag and/or coping with it when you travel

Does drinking water do anything?

Best eating, drinking & sleeping tips

Extroversion and jet lag

Advanced timeshifting strategies

While in the air

Melatonin, caffeine, & alcohol



From the travel experts at Good Neighbor Insurance



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This multi-installment travel guide will help you travel and control jet lag (*desynchronosis*)

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ANOTHER CHECK-IN COUNTER.

If you're planning a trip overseas or are a frequent traveler, you know all about "jet lag" –

*That condition of inner body-clock confusion over whether it's day or night, time to eat or not, whether to try and stay awake until nighttime or take a quick nap and get onto local business time. If you travel frequently you may even experience *circadian rhythm sleep wake disorder* (CRSWD).*

*You get tired easily by 11:00am, are easily confused, start losing track of details, make fun of yourself, get headaches, start relying more and more on coffee and adrenaline, fall asleep unexpectedly in meetings (or *take a nap and miss a meeting*), become irritable or critical of circumstances or clients.*

*If you are a frequent flier, or if you can't afford to lose a day or two to jet lag, *this guide is for you.**

IT BRINGS TOGETHER ALL THE LATEST SCIENCE AND TECHNIQUES ON BEATING, PREVENTING, AND COPING WITH JET LAG

....ALL IN ONE QUICK, HOW-TO GUIDE.

So let's get more productive.

Should we be trying to "trick" the Suprachiasmatic Nuclei (SPN) in our brain, or surrender to their circadian rhythm?

Is it possible to "reset" our sleep cycle within a 24 hour period so that we can function at near 100% on shorter trips?

The biggest key, tip, or technique you will receive from this guide, in any of its installments or sections, is to **start with a plan**. Having a clear expectation or anticipation of arrival, what time it will be, and then what you do to start accommodating to that time zone, will help you more than any other single tip or technique. Having a strong, well-prepared plan is the key to your success. Every frequent flyer will tell you that, consciously or unconsciously, they have a plan and anticipate what they will do when they have a layover, an all-night flight, or arrive at their final destination in the early morning hours after traveling east all day. This practical mental discipline helps their mind and body adjust to a new reference point so that they are less disoriented, and better prepared for their destination – Regardless of whether their flight is three hours or thirteen.

Jet lag at its worst

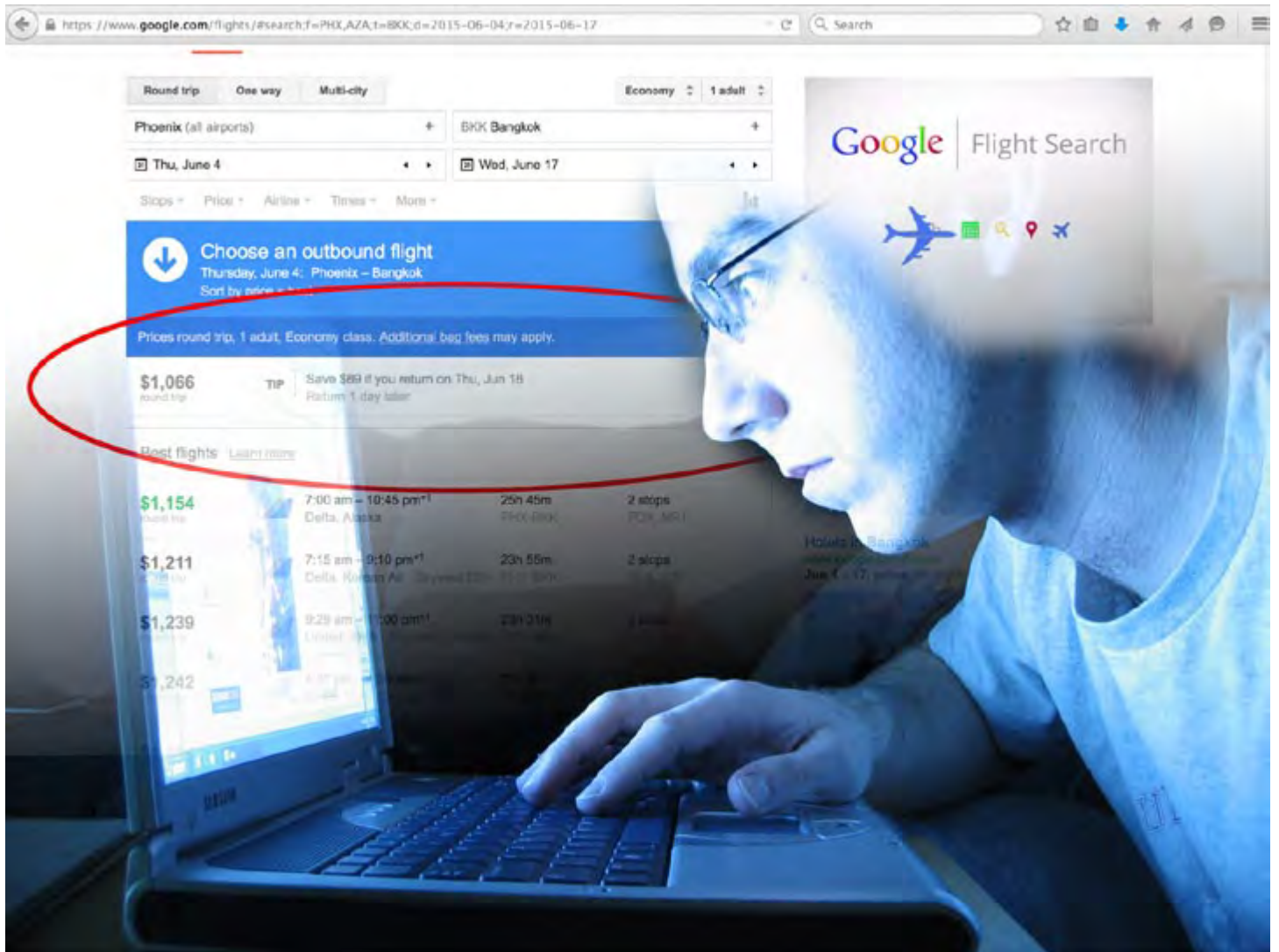
Traveling east from six to nine time zones causes the biggest problems, and doctors say that for every time zone crossed, it takes from 2/3rds a day to a day to recover from jet lag (get acclimated). **But no one has that kind of time**, either at your destination, or when you return home. Therefore we have brought together the best advice on beating jet lag you'll ever find in one place (for free!), **because we're travelers too. And we want you to be safe, AND EFFECTIVE, on your travels.**

Okay, it may take some time to adjust, and you have an early appointment soon after landing in a foreign time zone. *How do you make the most of your time? Prepare for your trip? What things can you do to minimize jet lag and recover quicker?*

First, know that your “body clock” or “*circadian rhythm*” is not set by normal living conditions, but keyed by exposure to light, temperature, your social environment, and food/hunger, stress levels and adrenaline, as well as noise/stimulation. (You can learn more about circadian rhythm at this site, but understand that eating, environment and even your personality exerts a strong influence over jet lag: <http://brainworldmagazine.com/following-your-circadian-rhythm/>)

Should you use melatonin or caffeine to help you compensate for a new time zone? Do different people and personalities adapt or struggle with change more than others? What specific things can you do based on your own personal style to compensate?

Over the course of this series you should find plenty of advanced techniques from travel experts, on how to be ready for your next trip. And every trip after that.



QUICK POINTERS AND TIPS (YOU'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE)

Let's get these quick tips over quickly.

You have probably already read them before, on hundreds of websites and in travel magazines.

They aren't difficult and mostly common sense.

If possible, try to arrive a few days early to give your body a chance to adjust.

Change your watch/phone as soon as you board. Or earlier. Getting your brain onto local time where you are headed is the best way to adapt to the new time zone.

Have a plan. Expectation and mentally picturing what you are going to do on the plane and when you first arrive can help your body accept sleeping during daylight hours, etc.

If traveling long distances, try to schedule flights so that you land in the early evening so you can quickly go to bed. The best itinerary has you arriving in time to soak in some sun, have a light dinner, then settle in and go to sleep.

Do not eat a large meal before sleep, but plan instead to eat a large breakfast.

Try to avoid socializing or seeing people upon arrival/your first night.

If you're arriving at your destination in the morning, sleep as much as possible on the plane. If you're arriving in the evening, try to arrive tired rather than rested - Do what you need to in order to stay awake on the flight.

If you're traveling west then go to bed later. If you're traveling east, go to bed earlier. *(More on "Timeshifting" in its own section!)*

If planning on a long flight, what seat you are on does matter. If your airline has a "premium economy section," it's worth spending for the upgrade or getting an exit row seat.

Try to arrange layovers where you can shower, sleep for a few hours (depending on local time), get up and walk around, catch up on the news and recharge devices *(Depending on local time you want to be awake and stay busy if it's the middle of the day, not be asleep on a plane).*

On arrival, Get in a morning jog or morning exercise, even a walk in the sun that first day, will do wonders for your circadian rhythm, which is "reset" by the sun.

Eliminate distractions - If you have created a mental plan for what you need to do on the plane to be ready when you arrive (based on local time), do everything within your power to stick to plan. Noise cancellation headphones, ignoring your seat mate, sleeping mask, eating at the right times from your carry-on stash, movies, iPad,...**stay on plan.**

Wear shoes that are comfortable and easy-in, easy-out, such as Sanuks.

Eating foods that promote insulin secretion, such as a carbohydrate-rich pasta dish, might help our body clocks enter a sleep stage, while light, protein-rich snacks could help the body to stay awake. Consider an "Anti-jet-lag diet" or "jet-lag fast" which we will be discussing in-depth in a future section.

Repeated jet lag exposure, encountered by business travelers and airline personnel as well as shift workers, has been proven to increase risk of immune deficiency, mood disorders, elevated cancer risk, and anatomical anomalies of the forebrain. *(We will address ways to stay healthy - both mentally and physically, in this guide.)*

The best tip in this section:

Try to arrive in the afternoon, then recharge by getting some late-afternoon sun. Try to stay awake until your usual bedtime, or a bit earlier, and don't plan meetings that first evening but use it to relax, and settle back into your natural rhythm/sleep cycle.



KNOW THYSELF (PART A)

Are some people better at jet lag than others? Can you train to better cope with jet lag? -

There is scientific evidence that indicates that certain personality types, and people that regularly exercise, cope with jet lag better than others who do not. Those with more sensing and judging personality preferences (if you know keirsey-bates or myers-briggs personality tests) tend to struggle more with change and tend to like rituals including: Schedules, regularity, and habit. These, obviously, are the enemy of frequent travelers. Those who are more relaxed, spontaneous, like 'surprises,' and variety tend to cope better with changes to their natural rhythms, as do those who may not maintain a strict bedtime routine (or schedule) even at home. If this describes you, you will naturally have an easier time coping with the results of jet lag: Tiredness, lack of sleep, lack of memory, grouchiness, etc.

So how does this work? Someone who has a varied bedtime and wake time at home, or who tends to stay up late at night (after it is dark/quiet) will have less trouble with sleeping on a plane, or the lack of light/dark simulated during a flight. They may not need to worry as much about "*timeshifting*" which we will explain in detail in a later installment. Someone who has a tough time sleeping in, or who regularly goes to bed at 10:00 every night, should strongly consider "*timeshifting*" (if their schedule allows it) the week prior to departure. They should pay special attention to our *Adjusting Rhythms* section as well (Advanced techniques).

Are you a morning person or a night owl? Or somewhere in the middle? (<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/11/the-four-types-of-sleep-schedules/382596/>) Adapt your itinerary to your advantage. This is an easy guerrilla tactic that is free yet it seems to be rarely used by travelers. Are you a frequent dreamer?

This may indicate rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. Ask yourself when you usually dream, because this time is not your best, most restful time to sleep anyway and you may be able to cut into this “sleep time” easier than your regular restful sleep cycle (<http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/guide/sleep-101>).

Specifically, Most night-owls tend to adapt faster to the new time zone on trips traveling west. When traveling east, on the other hand, night owls tend to have a harder time, and it's the early birds who get the worm. Likewise, “morning people” are more readily able to rise and shine at any hour, even if it means cutting short the sleep period for a few hours each day such as traveling east and having a shorter day. Their struggles are often in trying to stay up when traveling west. (Read more at: <http://www.frommers.com/articles/6887.html#ixzz3OezxoTh1>)

Do books settle you down? Help you sleep? Movies? Maybe listening to classical music? Use this knowledge of your own body, and your personality, as well as your five senses to help you combat jet lag. Some people eat and immediately nod off. Others eat to stay awake. It all depends on how you are wired.

Are you an extrovert?

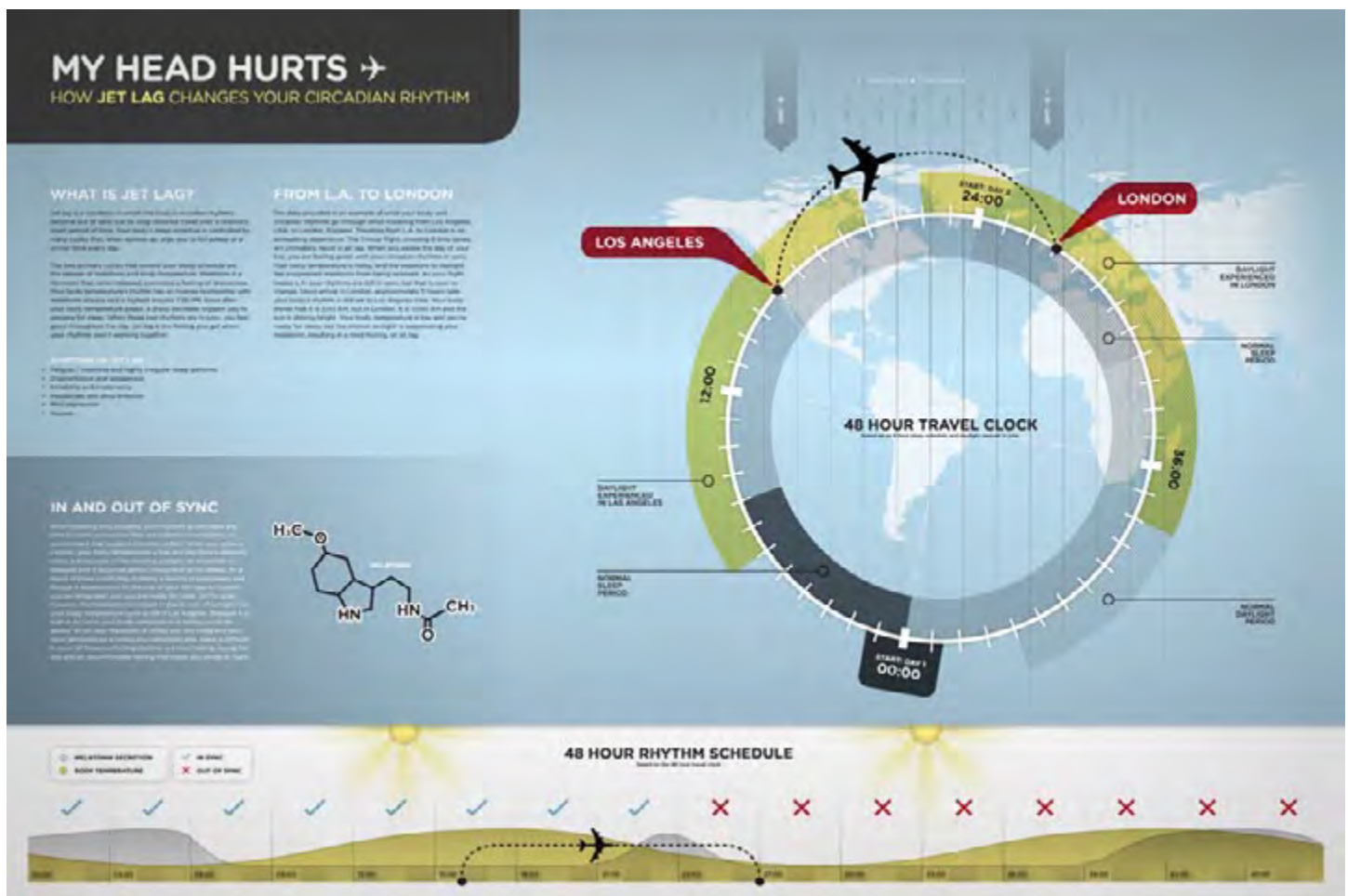
Extroverted types, who love to meet new people, mix among various social groups, and travel in a pack, tend to cope better with jet lag than people who reach a destination and retreat to their rooms with a book or remote control. This is because the more you expose yourself to external stimuli in your new environment, the faster the necessary chemical changes will take place in your brain to help you adapt to your new surroundings. And stimuli, like exposure to light/the sun, temperature, food/hunger, **and yes, even social cues**, is one of the keys to *circadian rhythm*. Unfortunately, these same people are likely to meet friends upon arrival, go down to the hotel bar, or go out rather than taking that first night to re-adjust.

As you might guess, healthy people cope better with jet lag than people in poor health, and age also is a factor since older people generally adapt slower. HOWEVER, older people and retirees usually have more opportunity to plan trips and often trip plan more sensibly with less crammed schedules which helps when trying to adjust due to key lag.

One way our owner deals with this issue of morning/evening rituals, habits and schedule is to build anticipated rituals/habits into his travel plans. This works especially well if you travel to the same place every year or every month. He has a place he goes for the same thing for breakfast, has a plan to sleep and shower when he arrives at his layover, has a plan and ritual for what he going to wear when he wakes up, etc. so that his mind can relax and already start accepting/adapting to the new time zone. Since he likes things being the same, has daily rituals and goes to bed at the same time each night, these travel rituals and planned habits are his way of making his personality and strengths work for him. Singapore has a unique set up where you can pay for a room (in the airport before exiting security) for 6 or 9 hours at a time to shower or sleep or work.

However other airports have lounges for showering, gyms, even places to nap, usually for a fee. Heathrow has one, so does JFK and Hong Kong, Zurich, Abu Dhabi, Amsterdam and more. So stop thinking about airport lounges as business class noshes and booze and think arrival recovery (like a shower and good scrub or a quick workout, preferably outside in the sun) or part of a strategic time-shifting plan. If you are not a member, or flying premium-class, some showers/rooms may require a \$20-\$50 fee to use. Your rewards program may also give you back-door access. It's surprising that some airports, notably LAX in Southern California has no such facilities.

We're going to spent some more time in the next section specifically focusing on personality-styles and sleep because unlike other aspects of "mind confusion," sleep and restfulness are a primary indicator of "jet lag" and how someone feels when in a new time zone.



Infographic on “Jet Lag” -
By designer Matt Kursmark at <http://www.porteno.net/2010/05/matt-kursmark-print-infographics/>



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOURSELF? (PART B) – SLEEP

Do small naps invigorate you or mess you up?

Personally, I usually cannot nap during the day, even with all the lights down and if it's quiet. My mind is *"churning and burning"* until about 6pm or 7:30pm when I *"hit the wall"* and become very tired after a full day. If I can push through till 10:00 or 11:00pm, (After getting the kids to sleep), I can go again till 1:30-2:00am. If I do end up taking a nap, it takes me 2-3 hours to get back to feeling fully awake and energized.

The New Yorker Magazine reports that drifting off to sleep and waking, then drifting off again can plunge your brain back into the beginning of the sleep cycle, which can be bad—making you feel lousy, harder to wake up next time, and creates *"Sleep Inertia"* - that period between waking and being fully awake when you feel groggy. (<http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/snoozers-are-in-fact-losers>).

The article goes on to say,

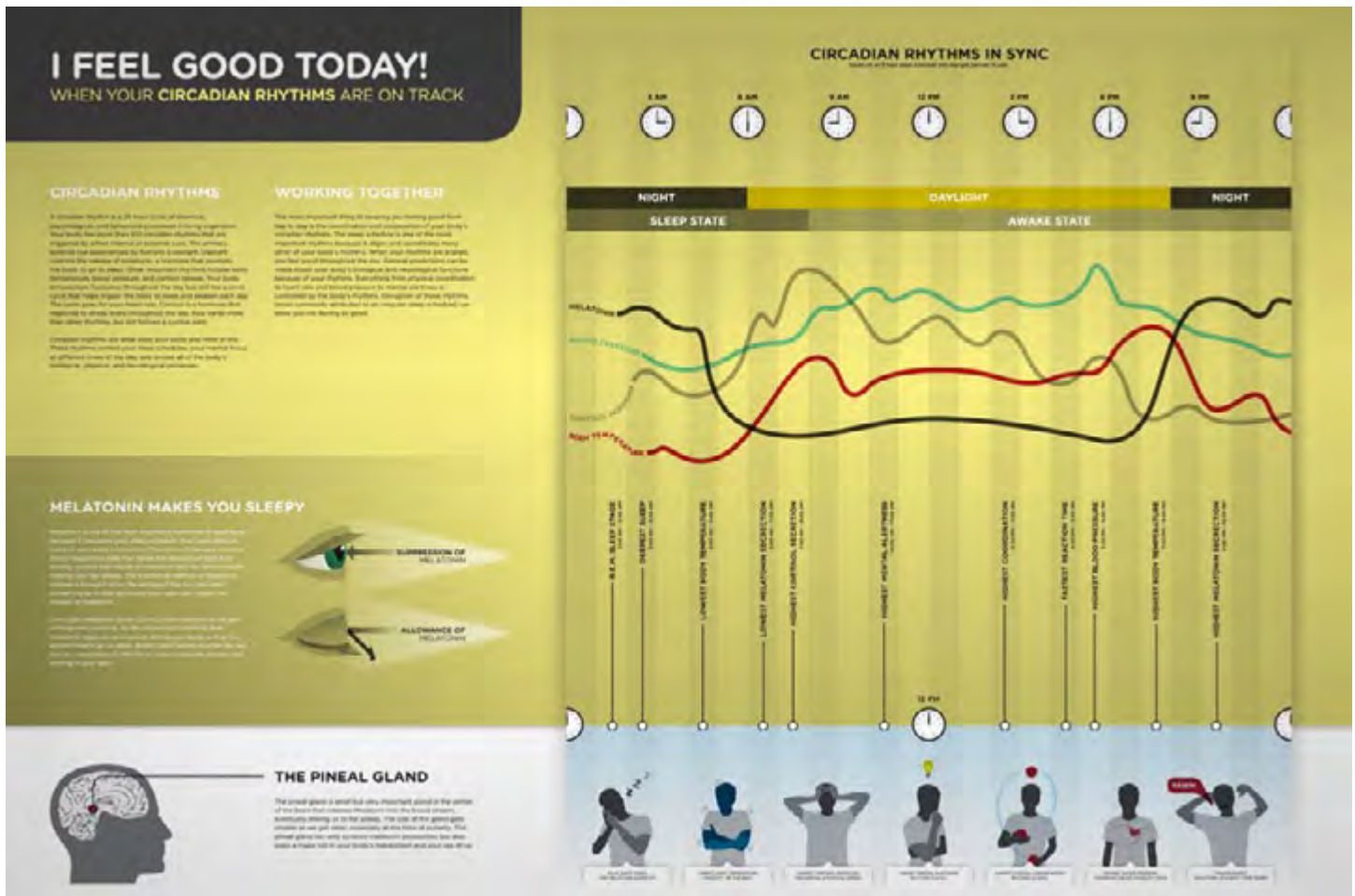
"Our brain-stem arousal systems (the parts of the brain responsible for basic physiological functioning) are activated almost instantly. But our cortical regions, especially the prefrontal cortex (the part of the brain involved in decision-making and self-control), take longer to come on board. In those waking minutes, our memory, reaction time, ability to perform basic mathematical tasks, and alertness and attention all suffer. Even simple tasks, like finding and turning on the light switch, become far more complicated. As a result, our decisions are neither rational nor optimal. In fact, according to Kenneth Wright, a neuroscientist and chronobiology expert, 'Cognition is best several hours prior to habitual sleep time, and worst near habitual wake time.'"

In fact, sleep inertia can last 2-4 hours after waking. Consider this if you are like me, and know that naps “don’t work” and that you need longer periods of Stage three or Stage four sleep, getting your deepest levels of restfulness right before waking.

Consider whether you do well sleeping with noise distractions, or in a non-horizontal posture, or are a larger person who cannot as easily stretch out your limbs/muscles in economy class. Knowing this means you are going to want to pay close attention to flight times, always give yourself an extra day so you can sleep upon arrival (during the evening, not the middle of the day!), and plan on timeshifting strategies compared to a co-worker or spouse who can sleep easily, with noise interference, upright in a seat, or for relatively short bits of time. Those who can catnap obviously have a clear advantage in quickly adapting to drastic changes in time.

The difference between one’s actual, socially mandated wake-up time and one’s natural, biologically optimal wake-up time is something that Till Roenneberg, a professor of chronobiology at Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich, calls “social jetlag.” - More on “social jet lag” at <http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/snoozers-are-in-fact-losers> where Professor Roenneberg states, “It didn’t really matter how long they had slept; what made a difference was when they actually went to bed—and when they woke up.”

Curious about this whole subject of sleep and restfulness? Read: <http://www.supermemo.com/articles/polyphasic.htm>, and also <http://www.supermemo.com/articles/polyphasic2010.htm>





TIMESHIFTING - PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

Adjusting Rhythms - Advanced Techniques and Apps

Timeshifting is the strategy of switching your rest cycle, and mental, social, and/or environmental reference to a new time zone, either while in-flight, or more popularly, slowly in the days leading up to your trip. Depending on your schedule, it is usually easier “going” rather than “coming home,” but we will address both here, as well as in the last chapter on **Recovery (at home)**.

The biggest neglecters of *timeshifting* may well be frequent fliers and long-time travelers (who should know better) who then end up taking a week or two to get over the effects of jet lag once arriving home (or somewhere along the road after an important presentation or meeting).

Timeshifting has been largely about adjusting light/dark cycles, but we want to suggest you think of timeshifting in a more comprehensive way – Taking into account food/hunger, your social environment, when you work best/adrenaline, personality, noise and quiet, as well as exposure to light and dark.

Timeshifting has two elements:

On-board/in-flight, and days prior to a trip to prepare for a new time zone/time change.

- We’ll start by quickly reviewing the “*in-air*” things you can do. (Many parts of this guide address the importance of “in air” things that can help you get onto your destination’s time.)
- The rest of this section will address “preparation at home prior to departure.”

“In-flight timeshifting” actually begins with thinking about your personality and sleep style, your destination, what flight paths, seating charts, and itineraries are available, and then booking flights accordingly.

Use your itinerary and seat assignment as a primary weapon to combat the effects of jet lag. Mentally reference the local time, as you get ready to go to the airport, check-in, and spend your time in-flight.

Pack for your flight. (Unless you know local people are sleeping, there is no reason to pack sleep mask, etc. in your carry-on. Instead, pack to work, with lots of stimulation, work plans, etc.)

As soon as you board, get yourself and your area set up to either rest or work.

Consider when you might freshen up or change clothes (as needed).

Pack your own food based on local time and eat it at the appropriate time.

Block out or welcome external stimulation based on the appropriate times versus when it is convenient for flight staff or seatmates.

More on-board advice can be found in that section of the guide.

Unless traveling North to South or South to North, you should always and immediately be thinking in terms of local time before, and when you board a flight.

Timeshifting in preparation of a trip: *Timeshifting is best when gradual so that it's less noticeable.* Some debate as to how early one should begin shifting their schedule. The idea is to avoid disruption. For some people, one or two days with larger “jumps” in sleeping, eating, busiest working times, may be sufficient. *Others (esp. those who like routine and strict schedules, and/or wake very early) may want to adjust more slowly over three or four days to the new time zone. Two good apps that can help you and suggest a sleep schedule are listed below.*

Besides adjusting daily to a new sleep routine, you will also want to adjust your workout times, your eating and coffee drinking schedule, your primary (most-efficient) work time/appointments/meetings at work, etc. – In order to best slowly adjust your natural routine to the new timezone as best you can. Schedule lunch earlier or later, or if that's not possible, pack food to eat at your desk and then use a fixed lunch period to read, or catch up on social media. If you have Tivo, use it to record shows that you can then watch earlier or later to match regular viewing times - only now on the anticipated local time.

If you go out at night, consider what time you normally leave the club, and adjust your partying accordingly. And cut back on the alcohol - which will hinder any bodily rhythm you are trying to create. *Sleeping-in late (Until 1:00pm or later, local time!) the day before your trip, will not help your body adjust to a new time zone!*

Limit noise after a certain hour, use your noise cancellation headphones at home, Add a local clock on your smartphone, or display both times concurrently leading up to your trip. You want to mentally start referencing that time as “real” and your current time as something you mentally are leaving/”trying to get away from.”

For more on “timeshifting,” search “*Jet Lag and Timeshifting*” or “*Jet Lag and Sleep Disorders*” at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>

Slowly adjusting sleep cycles

Consider **JetLagRooster** (<http://www.jetlagrooster.com/>) which will ask your travel itinerary and suggest slow tweaks to your schedule by twenty minutes to few hours a day leading up to your trip. *“Days early” timeshifting is more critical for transatlantic or TransPacific-type flights where time zones change more than 9 hours.*

We like that JetRooster allows you to start shifting sleep patterns to your new time zone:

- after arriving.
- after departing on the plane.
- up to 3 days before departing.

While we like JetLagRooster, it heavily depends on light/dark and sleep cycles alone, without really addressing other factors that contribute to jet lag. If using an app to adjust your sleep cycle, we recommend using it in combination with other methods, such as rescheduling your eating, coffee consumption, social calendar/environment so that you are getting the maximum benefit of timeshifting.

Researchers at the University of Michigan think *“Jet Lag is a math problem.”* They say this because of the relationship between light/dark and your body’s circadian rhythm. The way they have addressed this problem is by slowly shifting one’s sleep patterns an hour or two earlier (or later) per day up until your trip. They have also created an app – called **Entrainment** (iOS, Android - <http://entrain.math.lsa.umich.edu/>)

Entrain is an app that promises to monitor your body’s circadian clock using your smartphone, as well as adjust faster to new time zones and schedules. More about the Entrain app from the University of Michigan at <http://io9.com/this-app-could-help-you-overcome-jetlag-faster-1562775547> or watch the video at <http://entrain.math.lsa.umich.edu/>

The app uses two models: MPS schedules when the phase shift is large and bright light is available, LCS schedules when the phase shift is small and only dim light is available. The research behind the app is given here: <http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/article?id=10.1371/journal.pcbi.1003523>
They also recommend people look at **Harvard’s Sleep and Health Education Portal:** <http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/portal/>

While we like the idea, the app is a bit too rigid for our personality but if you like very specific guidance/help it might be just the thing for you. If you use timeshifting at home prior to a trip, please realize that a sleep mask, and/or noise cancellation headphones or quiet (if you are a light sleeper or have trouble getting to sleep) will be as important those days prior, as when getting on the plane.

We dislike that Entrainment addresses light/dark alone to solve the feeling and effects associated with jet lag. While light and dark cycles are probably the biggest factor; eating cycles, personality, social factors, stress/adrenaline, and noise/stimulation also play a big role. While the research does not claim that light alone causes jet lag, the app is keyed to sleep cycles and does not include eating, and control of other factors.

Best advice in this section?

Easily stack the Entrain app or JetRooster with the Argonne Diet, and the booking/on-flight strategies suggested in this guide, to get the best results.

Returning home

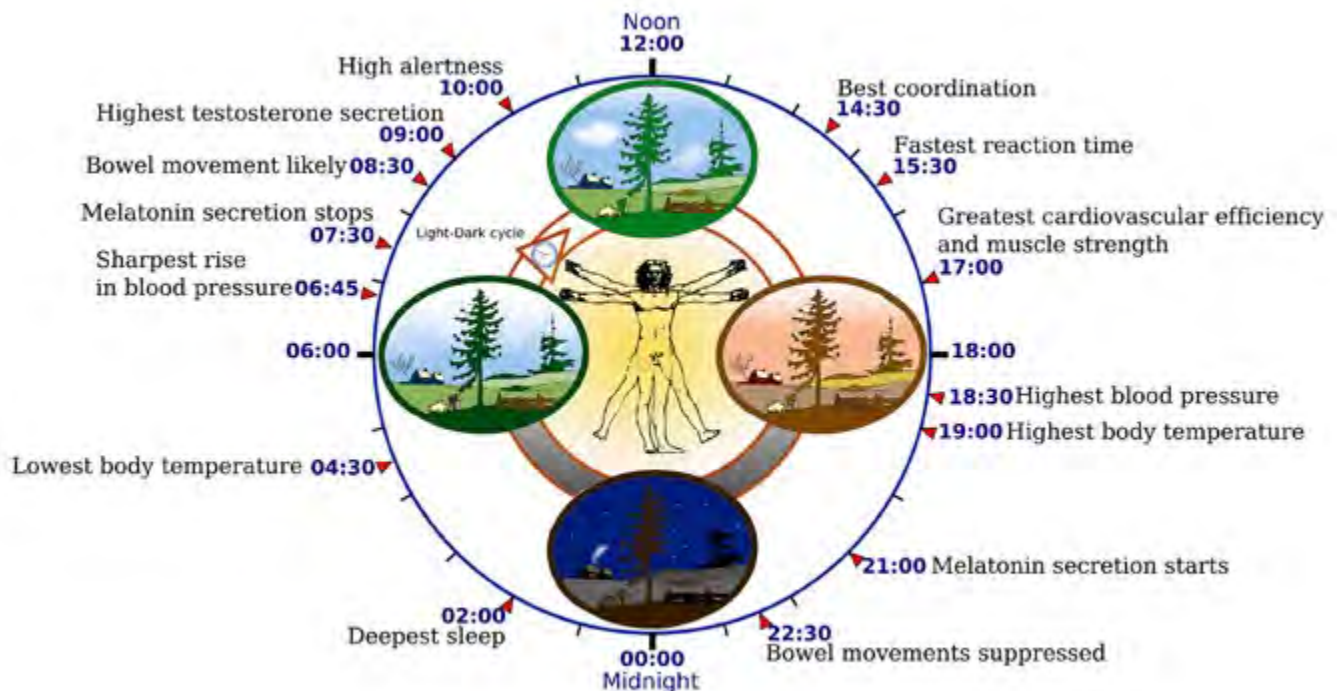
Timeshifting works the same way when returning home usually in reverse.

For example if you timeshifted (moving your clock forward and behavior) “earlier” for the trip over, you will want to start timeshifting (at the hotel or ?) back, later and later, until your flight home. More often than not, it may be impossible to timeshift very much prior to your trip home (or in order to maximize your vacation, or effectiveness, you may choose not to timeshift in the days leading up to your departure home). If so, being conscious of the time back home as you near your departure/immediately upon boarding is crucial to being at or near your peak upon landing at your destination.

Once again, you will want to pack for the plane; and plan your on-board time; based on local time back home. See if you can slow down the afternoon/night before your flight. create a mental plan for your trip and time back home. Use the jacuzzi, or gym/take a walk in the sun, based on local time back home.

Pack food for the return flight or fast. Remember you want to return to a regular schedule hungry at breakfast. Very light dinner if landing in the evening.

Try to schedule an extra day to timeshift/relax before flying home. Arrange your flights so that you return home on Friday (or over the weekend) so you have more opportunity to rest and recuperate before Monday morning. When you land, limit how many people you see/social plans until you “check-in” at home, take a shower and readjust.



Source:

Biological clock human - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Biological_clock_human.svg



USING FOOD AND DRINK TO COMBAT JET-LAG

Have you heard the tip about “power meals” the day before a trip and strategic fasting the day you travel? What about eating heavy foods the day before a trip? Does a drink on the plane help you sleep?

Some scientists are now saying that **if you are traveling during the daytime**, fasting or eating a lo-carb breakfast may help fight off jet lag, and eating a large dinner when you arrive may help by producing a large amount of insulin that helps your body readjust its internal clock. **If you will be traveling overnight or arriving late at night**, fasting for part of the day of your trip, with large hi-carb dinner on board, or at your destination (based on local time) may be a much better bet. Remember high carbs and insulin spikes keep you awake (*see more below*). Eating the right foods (*next section*) will aid any of these eating strategies.

When you eat is as key as what you eat.

Scientists have known since the 1920's that if you took an animal and only allowed it to eat while it was supposed to be asleep, it would switch its cycle.

If you eat at the time that's appropriate for the destination you plan to arrive at instead of the place you've left,

you can expect your circadian clock to also change. ***This strategy addresses one of the primary causes of jet lag: Sleep schedule (light and dark), noise/quiet, visual input, social environment (what other around you are doing), temperature and food/hunger.***

The important point is as close to your time of travel, skip the next meal (fast) and then proceed as if you are on local time, **using food that you have packed to specifically mimic local time/meals.** Never be at the mercy of the airline – *They serve meals based on the convenience of the flight schedule and air stewards, NOT based on doing what's best for you after you arrive.* Try to eat similar foods as you would for breakfast, lunch and dinner during your destination's time as well. This tricks the mind into accepting local time as well.

You can also try asking the steward to hold your food (on most flights) till a later, more appropriate, time to eat. As long as it does not interfere with landing or other duties, this should not be a problem and is a power tip!

Many travelers, including the military, follow **the Argonne Anti-Jet-Lag Diet**, otherwise known as a “*fasting and feasting*” program. Argonne was developed by biologist, Charles Ehret, at the Argonne National Laboratory outside Chicago. The diet alternates two days of moderate pre-departure feasting with two days of fasting — feast, fast, feast, fast — working backwards with the second fast being your travel day.

Just like getting to your destination a little tired is better than getting there a little too rested, getting there a little hungry is better than getting there having just ate (depending on local time of arrival of course).

The Army, Navy, CIA, Canadian National Swim Team, and Mormon Tabernacle Choir have all used the diet. It was created specifically for those crossing three or more time zones (+3 or -3), and for shift workers. It has been subject to many articles and reviews. ***Note that coffee (or tea or cola!) is not allowed except between 3-5pm on this diet for the 4 days before your trip if followed to the letter. Be prepared to give up all alcohol and wine as well (at least until arrival). If you are a coffee addict like me, and get caffeine headaches, this plan may not work for you.***

You can read more about the Argonne travel diet at: [http://www.netlib.org/misc/jet-lag-diet A .pdf](http://www.netlib.org/misc/jet-lag-diet%20A.pdf) and at: <http://maphappy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/The-Argonne-Anti-Jet-Lag-Diet-Guide.pdf>

There also used to be a good online app, but we can't seem to find it anymore.

Related to *the Argonne Anti-Jet Lag diet* is the **anti-jet lag fast** developed by a team from Harvard and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. Since jet-lag is caused by confusion of our circadian clocks, coordinated by a tiny cluster of cells in the brain called the *suprachiasmatic nucleus* (either due to light/dark or due to food or the lack of it), you can try fasting both before and during your long flight, then eating in a pattern that puts you in sync with local time (and arriving hungry.) Note this is esp. good if you plan to travel and arrive in the early morning hours such as a transcontinental flight. You should still drink as much water as possible, while being conscious of local time. You should also eat soon after you land, as close to a local meal time as possible. More at: <https://hbr.org/2009/05/a-fast-solution-to-jet-lag.html>

Science says that one starvation cycle is usually enough to override the traditional light-based circadian clock. So not eating on the day of your trip (depending on what time you depart and arrive, so that you begin local time eating breakfast) is always worth a try. Combined with other strategies used to adjust or trick your other senses, one day fasting may be enough.

If fasting isn't your thing, and you are still en route when it's breakfast time (at your travel destination), wake

up and get up, go wash your face and brush your teeth. Then have a piece of fruit and power bar or protein bar. The most important aspect of this phase is to eat a high-protein breakfast because, Ehret says, it signals *“your central nervous system that a new time frame has begun.”* You can then play solitaire, start on your autobiography, or do anything – just stay awake. If you fall asleep, you’ll slip back into your old time schedule, and the plan will be ruined.



EAT & DRINK LIKE THE PROS – SPECIFIC POWER FOODS

This section is copied primarily from an article recently published in Sports Illustrated.

What the Phoenix Suns and other NBA teams do to cope with jet lag? While NFL players may have to travel once a week before a game (about eight times a year) and usually do so a few days before they are expected to perform (And get acclimated), NBA players travel every day and sometimes play on successive nights. *What do these constant cross-country treks do to players? And what do their trainers and dietitians do to keep them performing day after day night after night?* A recent Sports Illustrated article shares their secrets.

So what should you eat, even if your body doesn't know the difference? Lakers diet doctor Cate Shanahan makes sure NBA players eat the same food (at about the same time destination time) as they would at home, minus the fat. *"The fats and the exclusion of most carbs help to get rid of blood-sugar fluctuations that keep people awake,"* says Shanahan.

Superfoods for frequent travelers:

- Salads and leafy greens
- Tomato Juice (*Why everyone drinks it and V8 on planes! - tomatoes have a high melatonin content*)
- Yogurt (*Which is high in protein, low in carbs, and naturally produces melatonin*)
- Vitamin water

- Protein powders (*can be brought onboard with an empty shaker-cup and made with water*)
- Beef jerky
- Tart cherry juice (*rich in melatonin and antioxidants*)
- Seeds and Nuts
- High-fiber and high-protein bars (*beware those which are mostly sugar and carbs*)

Sleep promoters:

- Bananas
- Hard-boiled eggs and other high protein foods
- Nuts such as almonds
- Milk

Sleep stoppers:

- Caffeine (*coffee, tea, energy drinks*)

It is also critical according to NBA dieticians as well as almost all doctors we checked with, that you stay properly hydrated. ***One thing that helps athletes bounce back quickly from jet lag is exercise, exhaustion (which aids in sleep), sunlight, heavy sweating and H2O intake.*** While taking diet into consideration for long flights, do not forget to insert an hour in the gym or fast walking/jogging in the sun. Exercise (especially in the sun) is probably the least studied element/solution to getting your circadian rhythm back on track.

Trying to get to sleep? Regardless of what you eat and when you eat, avoid alcohol when traveling. Whether the trip is long or short, arriving for business or have a day to recuperate, alcohol is just a mistake on a flight. The idea is to adjust your time clock, not confuse it with additional information to process and cope with later. Besides, if trying to follow any of the tips and tricks in this guide, how will you know if they are working if you don't refrain from drinking alcohol on flights, or right before you get on the plane? Try using the foods/drink above instead.

Read the whole article at <http://www.si.com/edge/2014/10/22/nba-travel-miles-athletes-jet-lag-nutrition>



WHERE ARE YOU HEADED? -

Depending on whether you are chasing the day or “time traveling” into tomorrow - today, here are some techniques you should know about.

Most people find it easier to travel west – chasing the sun – which lengthens your day, and makes it easier to go to sleep at the right time at your destination. If you’re traveling from east to west, your recovery will usually take 30% to 50% less time.

Read more at: <http://www.frommers.com/articles/6887.html#ixzz3Oet0a2ck>

Most “night-owl”-types tend to adapt faster to the new time zone on trips out west. When traveling east, on the other hand, night owls tend to adjust far more slowly, and it’s “*the early birds who get the worm.*” Likewise, “morning people” are more readily able to rise and shine at any hour, even if it means cutting short the sleep period for a few hours each day.

Like *The Points Guy* (www.pointsguy.com), If you are traveling halfway around the world, you might consider continuing west around the world to get home to avoid jet lag altogether! Often when traveling internationally, you can determine which direction you are going, sometimes with a layover (you might even be able to over-night and sleep there), to get home. It’s worth checking these routes, as well as prices when booking a flight. We recommend Google flights (<https://www.google.com/flights/>) or speaking with a good travel agent that knows their stuff.

It takes our bodies longer to adapt if you are traveling east, because our body clock - or circadian rhythm - finds it more difficult to adjust to a shorter day, than a longer one. (*i.e. It is easier for most people to stay up than it is to go to bed once you are fully awake*) Jet lag is not linked to the length of your flight, but to the west-east distance traveled. A ten-hour flight from Europe to southern Africa should not cause much jet lag, as the travel is primarily north-south. A five-hour flight from California to Chicago will usually result in jet lag because of the confusion caused by time zones (known as *desynchronization*).

Plan ahead.

You should try to break up long flights of more than 9 hours.

Try to arrange a layover where you can shower, sleep for a few hours (depending on local time), get up and walk around, catch up on the news and recharge devices (Again, depending on local time you want to be awake and stay busy if it's the middle of the day, not be asleep on a plane).

However, if your plane is going to arrive the next morning local time, a long uninterrupted flight might be just the ticket allowing you at least 6-7 hours of sleep if planned correctly.

Our owners at Good Neighbor Insurance regularly stop over en route to Indonesia. Having a lay over in Singapore and getting a shower after a long flight can make all the difference in the world when arriving at your destination. Also, on the return leg, a shower and change of clothes in Singapore in preparation for a long flight home helps break up a trip and allows your body and mind to "*timeshift*" easier. We are intimately connected to our bodies - our posture, our food intake, the light, and more. Anytime you can do something to physically help your body adjust to a change - You will have an advantage over someone who doesn't.

This last subtle, but important trick can make a real difference when you have to be at your peak as soon as your return home. For additional pointers on recovery upon returning home, see the last chapter of this guide.



WHILE IN AIR/TRANSIT (ADVANCED TECHNIQUES)

*As mentioned in the beginning of this guide, if you are planning on a long flight, your seat assignment matters. Pay a little more to upgrade to “premium economy section,” or getting an exit row seat. Airplane seating apps like SeatGuru by TripAdvisor (<http://www.seatguru.com/>, also an app on iOS and Android) are crucial to choosing not only your seat on a plane, but the RIGHT PLANE/itinerary since different airlines and different routes use different airplanes that have different amounts of space between rows - If you are curious, check out their site. **(Okay, that isn't quite while you are in the air!)***

Prepare your seat and bag: If planning to sleep, ready your headphones, eyemask, slippers (or Sanuks), toilet-ries kit, blanket or jacket, essential oils, beforehand – Creating this little routine in anticipation, and checking where everything is, will reassure your mind later on that you are ready for sleep.

Simulating daytime

By moving around. Chatting with seatmates (be sensitive if it's 3:00am and they aren't timeshifting!), big explosive movie marathons (with headphones), by washing up. Packing food and planning your own meal schedule. Plan to work. Don't allow others (Cabin stewards or seatmates) to control your “light and dark” (day and night). Instead control your mind (*below*) by taking control of your sensory environment.

If planning to work:

Spy out any other well-traveled, timeshifters who are also gearing up for work, ask those next to them if they'd mind changing seats on longer flights since those individuals usually will not want someone working and keeping them up anyway, and the co-worker next to you will help you stay awake and effective.

After you settle down, begin to set up your workspace and bag.

Having a "routine" will tell your mind you are ready to start work and get things done. Think of your morning routine back home. The object is to try and recreate a version of that routine to get into a certain frame of mind regardless of the actual time of departure or time where you are at now.

- Stretch/flex muscles.
- Create excitement/anticipation of what you want to get done.
- Mentally prepare yourself for your day (regardless of time)
- Set some goals time-wise
- Create a small series of rewards for staying on schedule.
- Find a funny joke to email (schedule) a coworker
- Ask a question of a coworker
- Consider spending a little bit more for WiFi access
- Turn screen brightness all the way up
- Use the overhead light. And use an USB light to brighten your area
- Keep window shades up as long as there is light
- Simulate coffeeshop background "noise" using YouTube (*below*)

(The reason for these "interactions" is that anticipating a smile from a co-worker, asking them questions (even when scheduled), and having "live" access to mail and the internet is that it simulates a "real" day regardless of time. Especially for extroverts and "people-persons." This will help you not feel as tired.)

Rather than carrying a sealed bottle of water or relying on stewards, consider a water bladder like a Camel-back. If you have a good way to carry it, take it empty through the TSA line and then fill it once past security. Most airports now have chilled refill stations for water bottles for free. Even drinking fountains can be used for the same purpose, and food stalls may offer you ice for free by request.

Exercise in your seat - Rising up on the armrests, doing isometrics, anything to keep blood flow moving including deep breathing exercises helps. Whether you are trying to simulate daytime by moving around or hinder deep vein thrombosis, the formation of blood clots in your veins, is a good reason to exercise and move around as often as possible on longer flights. Massaging limbs and back can also help esp. if traveling with a friend/mate. People who travel more than 4 hours at a time have a much greater chance of developing blood clots. Some frequent travelers even take baby aspirin before and after flights to help thin blood and protect against this.

"Create" your own random "buzz" (using earphones) when the plane is quiet and everyone else is a "newbie" trying to sleep when they should all be awake! Check out <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kjHrQwemW8> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOdLmxy06H0> and leave it playing behind your music or other work. This is kind of the opposite of playing classical music to relax, using your same noise cancellation headphones.

Planning to get some rest?

Based on your destination?

Always, always, get a window seat on longer flights or red-eye flights. esp. if you plan to sleep, have a hard time sleeping, or are a light sleeper. Just like the hospital, it seems that the moment you get settled in, or start to rest, someone comes along to wake you to “check on you,” bumps you as they walk down the aisle, or begins an in-depth philosophical discussion or family history lesson right next to you in a loud voice. Use Seatguru.com to decide where is best/has the most leg room. You can also ask at the gate, or from a fellow passenger, because on a longer flight they may want to get up easier to go to the toilet. But good luck. Plan ahead. Exit rows, bulkhead seats (with cabin wall in front of you), upgrades to business class, can all make a huge difference by the time you land. Likewise, rows near the back of the plane tend to get more traffic (near the restrooms), noise and even feel bumps due to air turbulence worse than seat over the wings or nearer the front.

Always pack a toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, razor, and change of underwear in your carry-on. This allows you to go through regular rituals when you want to, based on your destination and helps your body accept the new time zone easier.

Wear dark sunglasses aboard or carry a sleep mask with you. It's important, and you should 'never' get on a plane without them (<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B003CGJRNK?tag=tgl-t-20>). They will help simulate evening even in the middle of the day. The same goes for BOSE noise-canceling headphones, if you have a hard time sleeping with noise (earplugs can also do the trick, and save you money). These help combat “*environmental insomnia*” (or lack of sleep brought on by your surroundings/other people).

For some, comfy, warm slippers also help them immediately settle down and relax - Know yourself. And plan accordingly. For children a really soft plush animal to hold or squeeze is just the right item to carry on and travel with. Even for settling down and sleeping in a strange hotel miles from home. They also double as pillows, as do soft jackets/sweaters. A soft cashmere scarf draped over a backpack or purse can do the same thing.

When ready to sleep:

Practice mentally choosing to relax each part of your body, starting with your mind, emptying it of daily cares and “to-do's” once you arrive. Your schedule is well-thought out. Relax. Take a couple deep, slow breaths. Mentally “smile” to yourself. Then slowly, relax your forehead, your brows, your eyes, your mouth, your neck, your shoulders, consciously working your way through choosing to relax each set of muscles while “sinking” into your seat. These relaxation techniques will work better and improve over time with practice.

In traveling with a spouse or significant other, foot massages and/or calf massages can put some people to sleep almost instantaneously.

Next: What clothes are best to wear onboard?

Is loose clothing or tighter (dress) clothing better on a longer flight (for jet lag)?

"My company requires I wear suit and tie during work. Including on-board flights."

"I see all kinds of people wearing sweats on-board. Is that a good idea?"

"I REALLY hate it when people take off their shoes on flights - What is it with people nowadays?!"

Always layer cooler clothing on airplanes and take a jacket along - The point is to control your relative warmth and coolness to mimic nighttime or daytime. Cooler helps you stay awake in lieu of the sun/open window-shade.

Regardless of whether you *dress for success/business* in order to be treated better by cabin staff or it's required by your company, or you believe in boarding planes in fleece pajamas, you should never pack or travel in tight-fitted clothes that restrict circulation. That includes skinny jeans, as well as fitted shirts or jackets. Use your clothing as one more strategy to defeat jet lag. If going halfway around the world and boarding at night (and you are trying to simulate daytime), dressing nicely for work and intending to get as much real work done enroute will help you trick your body into thinking it's a workday instead of wearing fleecy pajamas. If traveling during the day, but needing to sleep onboard, wearing warm, comfy clothes and warm slippers as well as a blanket might get odd stares, but will help you tell your body it's time to relax/take a nap.

Personally, I ALWAYS dress for business including a pressed shirt and tie when boarding/disembarking and while in the airport/checking into hotels. I usually will also pack a comfortable set of clothes I can change into during long flights (being careful to roll dress clothes so they don't wrinkle) into my carry-on/garment bag. This way I am always comfortable and ready to meet the demands of the day. *Changing on the plane, as well as brushing teeth, etc. can also help trick your mind into "getting ready for bed."* And changing into dress clothes (if it's morning where you are headed), and freshening up by washing your face and shaving, helps you psychologically accept that it is morning even if it is dark outside or inside the cabin. *These rituals are powerful since your mind does them unconsciously every day.*

Realize that tighter, fitted shirts and blouses can also cut off circulation to arms and shoulders. While I make it a rule to always wear business clothes on planes, due to the deference and respect it gets me from others, I always wear regular-cut clothes, rather than "fitted" on planes. And natural fabrics as well, but never linen, since it looks like I slept in it even an hour after I ironed it, whether I am on a plane, or just sitting at my desk.

If you must wear heels onboard or dress shoes, depending on the length of the flight, wear a shoe style that allows you to slip it off and have a travel bag ready to slip them into. Having a second pair of shoes/sandals that are flat and pack small (like Sanuks) for the flight are important regardless of whether it's day or night. (if you haven't heard of Sanuks, take my word for it and read our review at <https://www.gninsurance.com/blog/news-and-helpful-links/best-shoes-for-travel/>) This way, you can have the comfort of being barefoot, with the dirty looks and they can be worn down the aisle to the restroom and even washed easily in a hotel sink later on (Just drop them into a ziplock bag after the flight).



ADDITIONAL TRAVEL TIPS FOR FREQUENT FLIERS

For longer trips and transcontinental flights, “live on local time,” says John Thompson (Chairman of Microsoft and former CEO of Symantec). The key tip to that is to sleep on the plane before you arrive. “*Jet lag is psychological. If you don’t think you’re gonna have jet lag, you won’t. Let’s just take my trip to Europe next week. I get on the plane, I take two Excedrin PM, and I go to sleep. And I wake up and it’s typically 10:30, 11 o’clock in the morning in London, and I work all day. You don’t take a nap, you take a shower, you go to work and you work all day, and you run your body on local time. Then plan to catch up later because if you log lots of travel miles, after 2-3 weeks you will need to catch up.*” His other killer travel tip? Own your own plane. (<http://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-beat-jet-lag-2015-2>)

For short, overnight trips, don’t try to change your sleep schedule. Make sure any meetings are still within your “normal,” at-home waking hours and then stay up till 4am or sleep in till noon. Whatever is “normal” for back home. Choosing a bit less efficiency when on the road is much more efficient than being wiped out after two or three days on the road!

Stop using alcohol or caffeine as an ‘easy’ or fast solution to resetting your body clock; or to force much needed rest. Sometimes Melatonin or caffeine (coffee, energy drinks like Monster or red Bull) can help you get through a night or hard day, or assist you when you have a specific goal/plan in mind.

- *Sleep confusion* is cumulative. It adds up, and for frequent fliers, that spells disaster when tricking your body versus finding creative ways to help your body adapt.
- Consider a *sleep specialist* if you are a frequent traveler/change time zones more than once a week. Sleeping pill or Ambien may help you sleep but they don’t help change your sleeping patterns or circadian rhythm.



THE USE AND ABUSE OF MELATONIN, CAFFEINE, AND USE OF DRUGS TO COMBAT JET LAG

Just to clarify at the outset, we do not support or encourage the use of drugs such as Melatonin, Lunesta, or Ambien, or “energy drinks” (coffee, RedBull, Monster,...) to “solve” tiredness or jet-lag. The strategies in this guide are much more powerful, and will leave you feeling much better, than using drugs or alcohol.

First, your natural levels of melatonin are lowest during the day when you are awake and active, exposed to lots of light, and your melatonin levels are highest at night, helping you sleep. The benefit of using melatonin is greater the more time zones are crossed, and is less beneficial for westward flights than for eastward trips.

Because it helps with sleep, many travelers rely on melatonin as a first order of business when they get on a plane. In the UK, it can only be prescribed by a doctor and, even then, some may be reluctant because it is unlicensed. But in the USA, it can be bought over-the-counter. It can trick the body into thinking it is tired or time to sleep. If you do take melatonin in pill form to aid your sleep or ingest it naturally in foods, make sure you also have a sleep mask and a way to settle down out of the light. If you take it at the wrong time, or when exposed to light, melatonin can make your jet lag worse. And that will make you one grumpy customer.

Always consider the local time at your destination, and if you use melatonin, do it as part of a larger plan to aid sleeping on your destination’s local time. Without any other planning, if you take melatonin at 9:00am (your time) after a good nights sleep in order to help switch to your destination’s local time, it is probably not

going to work. It would be better to “timeshift” the day before, and get to the airport slightly exhausted, so that you really want to sleep at 9:00am. Then melatonin as part of an overall in-flight strategy (window seat, noise cancellation earphones, a sleep mask with post-it clearly saying DO NOT WAKE, windowshade down, being tired, and convincing your senses that it’s the middle of the night (based on destination time) and looking forward to sleep, may work well for you. We strongly recommend talking with your doctor and doing some research (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4273450/>) before self-medicating.

In reverse, coffee or energy drinks can help you stay up longer so that you have that extra little push to get to your hotel or destination before you go to sleep. *It may be just our opinion, but trying to stay up (and then go to sleep on local time) is a better use of supplements (caffeine, red bull) than using them to sleep.* Realize that energy drinks may cause you restlessness even after your arrival, depending on if your body is used to them or not, and your overall tolerance level. *(We discussed this issue on traveling west vs. traveling east.)*

If you usually have coffee at 4pm to get you through the afternoon, realize that 4pm is actually 10pm local time, and DO NOT have your usual 4pm coffee! Or drink it at 10am (which is the local equivalent). Likewise, your usual “morning coffee” on the plane may be at 11:00 at night if that is the equivalent local time, which is fine if planning to stay up. **BUT (and this is one big but!)** do not then go back to sleep, since you will be “resetting” your body clock all over again, starting at this new time, and really messing up your rhythm!

Note that many doctors and online resources discourage caffeine on flights since it is a diuretic (takes water out of your body) and most airplanes have very dry air already – Staying hydrated is always a concern when flying. Carrying water with you, even a bottle you fill up once past security, is the way to make sure you have H2O intake, when you want it, rather than waiting for a steward to wake you when sound asleep.

What about Pycnogenol?

This is a dietary supplement found at Whole Foods—The extract of the bark of French pine trees. It seems to have reduced jet lag symptoms in a small 2008 study conducted in Italy. People who took 50 milligrams of Pycnogenol three times a day for a week, starting two days before their flight, had substantially fewer symptoms (including fatigue, insomnia, and mental slowness) than people who took a placebo. More at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19597404> however that assumes you are going to start a schedule of drug-taking a week before a trip. Personally, there are better methods presented here.



JET LAG FOR SENIORS (DOES IT TAKE LONGER TO ADAPT?)

Jet lag for older adults - Here are the pluses and minuses:

Jet lag affects all people, due to bodily rhythms, however **it has been proven to take a greater toll the older you get, or if your health is poor.** *Unfortunately it's hard to find a lot of information online specifically for seniors who travel. Most of the articles have the same content as presented in travel magazines.*

But jet lag also affects each senior differently – This is partly due to reliance on habits and daily routine, but also due to how long your body takes to recover/heal itself. *Knowing this will help you as you consider the various tips throughout this guide.*

Seniors also have some wonderful advantages over younger travelers.

Usually the older you are, the less sleep your body requires (this may, or may not, be true of you so the rule, “*know yourself*” once again takes precedence). Four or five hours of sleep might seem very restful. If so, you have a 3-4 hour advantage over someone who needs a “full night’s sleep.” Fasting for a flight might also be easier for you since as your body ages, it requires less calories. Make sure you are still drinking lots of water or juice. Lastly, older people tend to know themselves and their bodies best. *That experience, and knowing when to trust it, is the greatest advantage you have when flying across time zones.*

Do you wake earlier than most?

Advanced sleep phase disorder (ASP) affects approximately 1% in middle-aged and older adults and increases with age. It is when a person regularly goes to sleep yet wakes up several hours earlier than most people. People with ASP tend to be “*morning types*” who typically wake up between 2 a.m. and 5 a.m. and go to sleep between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m.

If you go to bed at a preferred time on a regular basis, you will usually have a very stable sleep pattern. Knowing this means you should plan flights earlier in the day that arrive earlier. A red-eye flight might also make sense, saving you more money. Try to arrange flights so that sleep times are least affected even if flying in the night before or departing a half-day early.

Bright light (sunlight) therapy also seems to have more of an impact on people as they age. As does exercise. So walks in the morning, and restricting light if trying to sleep on an airplane to simulate local time are critical if you are an older traveler.

If you are a person who likes routines, reread that section of this guide and plan accordingly.

Slow down (a little). Or add a little time to your trip. Our owner, Jeff Gulleson (in his seventies now) still takes at least one trip a year to Southeast Asia, with lots of meetings, and usually a very full schedule prepared for him ahead of time. One way he has changed his travel planning over the last year or two is that he now adds an overnight in Singapore in order to shower and sleep before flying on to Jakarta. While it wasn't strictly necessary in the past, it is one more way he has found that helps him be effective, and rested, once he arrives.

Jet lag adds up. One noticeable effect of jet lag is that it is cumulative. Airline pilots, especially “Long haul” pilots flying over six hours at a time (regardless of sleep) are only allowed to fly so many miles before they have to have extended time off. A typical week is usually no more than 30 hours in 7 days. (Considering an international flight can last 12-14 hours, this is a long time in the air.) The FAA states, “*pilot needs to be able to look back in any preceding 24-hour period and find that he/she has had an opportunity for at least eight hours of rest. If a pilot's actual rest is less than nine hours in the 24-hour period, the next rest period must be lengthened to provide for the appropriate compensatory rest.*” (https://www.faa.gov/news/fact_sheets/news_story.cfm?newsId=6762)

Aches and planes

Bodily aches and pains due to being seated so long can cause soreness and make it difficult to sleep, adding to jet lag (as well as risk of stroke). Blow-up travel pillows, lumbar support, even a foot rest, (if you can't use your carry-on under the seat ahead of you) can be important in order to help you stay comfortable for extended periods of time. Plan accordingly.

Keeping your body loose and limber can help on long flights as well. Consider isometrics and exercise you can do on the plane. (<http://www.airnewzealand.co.nz/assets/PDFs/inflight-comfort.pdf>) You may want to consider wearing compression stockings or socks while traveling or taking a blood-thinning medicine before you fly. This helps reduce the chance of DVT (*Deep vein thrombosis*) which can result in strokes, etc.



RECOVERY (ARRIVING HOME)

Try to be well-rested ahead of time coming home if at all possible. People rarely have a plan or strategy for “home” yet rarely do we have a couple days to decompress and get back on schedule. So have a plan in mind. Being sleep deprived can be a recipe for disaster upon returning home. especially if you have to report on your trip to the Board. Then stay up all night creating a presentation.

Trying to cram in as many vacation spots or as much work as possible, planning to rest once you get home is the most common business mistake according to surveys of frequent fliers.

Give yourself a few days (the weekend?), and up to a week before critical meetings upon arriving home, especially if traveling east, or for more than three time zones. Or take one extra day before flying home to rest up/ recharge. The general “rule” is one day for each one-to-two time zones crossed traveling east. *Like the rest of the strategy in the guide discusses, plan meals around your arrival time back home and plan your return just like it’s another “destination.”*

Too many people forget that flying home will affect you the same as “flying to” an appointment.

Most of us don’t have the luxury of having a week off once we land but are right back to work and email. If you can, schedule return flights so you have a weekend to decompress. Get back into normal weekend routines immediately. Open curtains and blinds so that local morning sunlight will help reestablish circadian rhythms almost immediately, or at least within 24 hours.

Stay up. Go to bed at your “normal” local time. *Get up and talk a walk in the morning locally, rather than sleeping in on Saturday, regardless of tiredness, or schedule.* Or walk the dog. Doctors recognize the value of a walk in the sunshine to boost your mood, help reset your body clock and even increase your immunity (<http://arcticcirclemagazine.com/outdoors/walking-on-sunshine/>). Walking in “nature” is the best, but even a good walk around a park will do. *“When you engage with the sights, sounds and smells of your surroundings (with little to no effort), you allow the mind to rest and recharge. This is likely why a 2012 study from the Public Library of Science reported that after four days of hiking and camping in the wilderness, backpackers improved their scores on a problem-solving creativity test by 50 per cent.”*

...So greet the neighbors. Visit the local cafe or coffee shop. Check the time once awake and often. These “routines” will help you reconnect to local time quickly. Usually in less than 24 hours, even without “timeshifting” or using the Argonne diet (Difficult if you are gone only 2 days or less).

Go back to showering in the morning or before bed as usual - Again, both hydration of the skin (refresh and reinvigorate) AND routine are critical for your recovery. Many studies suggest the benefits of submerging your face in cold water in the morning, or splashing volumes of cold water on your face. It actually slows your heart rate and is excellent for tightening the skin.

Mental expectation and anticipation (seeing family, the dog) usually help most people recover quickly. *Think about your last trip - Was your mental state “hopeful” on the return flight, looking forward to your own bed and house? This is recognized as a powerful benefit of “coming home.”* (return flights) Often, people will even applaud upon landing. These endorphins, and even adrenaline, will aid your recovery from jet lag upon returning home.

Lastly, keep germs at bay

More people get sick after return flights than when going on a trip. Both adrenaline and mental “push” help you fight off germs when busy, and in a new location, unfortunately our bodies and minds “shut down” as soon as we land at home, or get on a plane home.

Take *Airborne* with water, or lots of vitamin C. ***You can even sleep on the plane with a warm hand towel (or cool towel) over your face.*** The hot water gotten from an air steward on a hand towel from your carry-on does wonders (*just like it does for First Class Passengers!*) as does a cool towel. Plus the towel and moisture help block/trap pathogens from being inhaled, as well as keeping your hands from rubbing eyes or wiping your nose - primary entry points for germs on planes. The average person rubs their eyes or touches their face from 8 to 16 times every hour, up to 100 times an hour - A good reason to carry hand sanitizer at all times when flying! (See “*The Top Three Risks when Traveling Overseas*” guide - free online.)



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