

Tips for Sleeping Better When Traveling

When you travel across multiple time zones by air, some disruption of your internal clock is inevitable. These tips can help you minimize this disruption, and may accelerate the process of adapting to the new time.

Before your trip:

- For north/south or east/west travel less than 3 time zones, continue your current sleep wake schedule
- For travel across 3 or more time zones:
 - For eastward travel, try to gradually go to sleep earlier
 - For westward travel, try to gradually go to sleep later

On the airplane and at your destination:

- Avoid alcohol and caffeinated beverages
- Drink water to avoid dehydration
- Do not overeat
- Dress comfortably

At your destination:

- Adopt the local time for your sleep/wake schedule
- A short nap (30 minutes to an hour) can be beneficial and give you energy for the day. Don't nap longer, however, as that may delay your adjustment to the new time zone or make it difficult to sleep at night.
- Try to get some exercise during the day, but not immediately before bedtime
- Try to maintain customary bedtime sleep habits
- For eastward travel across 3 or more time zones, in reference to your departure time zone:
 - Avoid light exposure (e.g., wear sun glasses) during the evening and first half of the night
 - Get light exposure during the second half of the night and early morning
 - Consider using melatonin 2-5 mg in the late afternoon or evening
- For westward travel across 3 or more time zones, in reference to your departure time zone:
 - Avoid light exposure during the second half of the night and early morning
 - Get light exposure during the evening and first half of the night
 - Consider using melatonin 2-5 mg in the early morning