



Work Smart Live Smart

Minimizing Jet Lag And Travel Stress

**By
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Have you ever found yourself exhausted or caught a cold after flying for a business trip or vacation? Whether it is for business or for pleasure, stress from traveling can cause a person to experience many physical and mental symptoms.

One of these symptoms is Jet lag which occurs when traveling across time zones disrupts your body's natural sleep and wake rhythms. These rhythms are controlled by the day and night light cycles we experience in these zones and its disruption can produce a variety of mental and physical symptoms.

Symptoms of jet lag include:

- Fatigue
- Sleep disruptions
- Irritability
- Upset stomach and digestion
- Headaches
- Grogginess

15 Tips To Protect Your Physical Health And Conserve Your Mental Energy When Flying

Before your flight

- Get plenty of sleep before you fly to boost your immune system
- To avoid sleep difficulties gradually adjust your sleeping schedule to the local time zone in advance of your trip and select a flight that allows early evening arrival and then go to bed around 10 p.m. that night
- Eat very little the day before you leave. Keeping meals light uses less energy in digestion
- Exercise, such as walking around the airport before you board can have a lasting benefit through the flight and decrease the risk of blood clots
- Prepare and pack well in advance of your trip so as not to needlessly increase your stress. Have a checklist and take it with you

- Get to the airport early to avoid the additional stress of rushing

During the flight:

- Set your clock to the new time zone at the beginning of your flight
- If trying to keep your body awake – eat a protein packed meal of meats, dairy or beans. If trying to put your body to sleep – eat a carbohydrate rich meal. This will give you an hour of energy followed by feeling drowsy
- Drink lots of water while flying. Air travel is dehydrating. Water can reduce jet lag symptoms and can provide enough moisture to your body so that your mucous membranes don't dry out and make you susceptible to infections. Drink lots of water during what would be your daytime and stop drinking an hour ahead of what will be your new bedtime. This will help your kidneys adjust to the new time zone. Water also has the ability to energize you. Quickly drinking a cool glass of water can ward off an energy lull
- Avoid alcohol which is difficult to metabolize, consumes much needed energy and dehydrates the body
- Avoid salty snacks as they add to the dehydrating effect which can contribute to the increased risk of blood clots while flying
- Stretch and contract your muscles, especially those in your legs to reduce the risk of blood clots. Doing these exercises during your new daytime can help to trick your body clock
- Stimulate your mind with a good book or crosswords to keep your activity level high while trying to stay awake and have enough productive work with you to offset flight delays and long waits in the airport

After the flight:

- Get outside into the daylight for a half an hour or more to help readjust your internal clock. It takes about one day to adjust for each time zone crossed
- Follow a bedtime ritual that promotes a healthy sleep

By following these simple strategies you may be able to avoid many of the difficult physical and mental effects of travelling associated with jet lag.

Stress and wellness specialist, **Beverly Beuermann-King** translates current research and best practices information into a realistic, accessible and practical approach through her dynamic stress and wellness workshops, on-line articles, e-newsletters and media interviews and through a collaboration called *Awakening The Workplace*. Visit www.WorkSmartLiveSmart.com for more on Beverly and her wellness work.

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