



Fighting Jet Lag

What is jet lag? Basically it is the disturbance of biological and psychological rhythms as a result of passing through different time zones during a flight.

The human body has a biological clock, or rather a large number of biological clocks, all of which 'tick' at different speeds. They control the workings of our body organs and affect hormone levels, blood pressure, body temperature, digestion, the workings of the kidneys and bladder and the heartbeat.

In order for the body to work harmoniously, its rhythms have to correspond with the rhythms of day and night. When we travel through time zones, it finds itself having to cope with other day and night rhythms.

Fortunately, our body clock is able to come to terms with these changing day and night rhythms. The different mechanisms all need their own periods of time in which to adjust to each other.

The effects are greater when you travel eastward. This is because you are losing hours rather than gaining them.

Although everybody has to make their own personal adjustment to jet lag, there is one thing, which seems to be beneficial to most people: try to get into the new rhythm as soon as possible. Socialize as soon as you can with the people you are meeting or staying with. In this way you will lose the old rhythms sooner. If you feel tired when you arrive, try not to sleep immediately but stay awake for as long as you can and go to bed a little earlier than you normally would.

Set your watch to your destination's time zone as soon as you board the plane.

Increasing fluid intake. Humidity in jet cabins is low; so prevent dehydration by drinking lots of fluids. Water and fruit juices are best; avoid alcohol, coffee and tea.

Exercise on the plane. Mild isometric exercises can relieve stiffness and boredom, and alleviate fatigue.

Adjusting your sleeping patterns. If you will arrive in the morning, sleep as much as possible on the plane. If you are arriving in the evening, avoid napping.

