

### How to beat jetlag

Frequent travel is a reality for many people in today's working world. Flying around the globe for work is something many people dream of, and it can be thrilling to wake up in a new and exciting part of the world, but it also has its downsides. It can be exhausting, time consuming, and take you away from your loved ones and the comforts of home. One of the most difficult things about international travel is the dreaded jetlag, that feeling of malaise, exhaustion, disruptions in appetite and inability to sleep that is a result of our circadian rhythms being disrupted.

Let's look at some tried-and-true tips from experts on how to avoid, or at least significantly lessen jetlag.

- **Pre adjust.** Though it isn't possible for everyone at all times, one of the best things to do to avoid jetlag at your destination, is to slowly adjust before you leave. Plan a gradual shift to your new time zone, starting a few days to a week before you're set to take off. There are apps and websites that can help you do this, but a good rule of thumb is to go to bed slightly earlier if you're flying east and slightly later if you're traveling west.
- **Reset your watch immediately.** As soon as you get on the plane, reset your watch or the clock on your phone to your new time zone. Then, try to do what you would be doing were it that time, whether it is sleeping or eating or reading a book.
- **Skip the alcohol.** It is tempting to have a glass of wine or a cocktail to help you sleep on the plane, but alcohol will only make things worse. Alcohol is more powerful at high altitudes, and the sleep you will get will not be deep sleep. Add to this that alcohol dehydrates you, and you are more likely to wake up groggy at your destination.
- **Eat lightly.** Accepting every snack the flight attendant offers and ordering a deep-fried meal at the airport certainly beats boredom and breaks up the monotony of a long haul flight, but it won't help jetlag. Your body will have to work harder to digest these heavy foods, so instead of big meals, try eating fruit, raw veggies, and drink lots of water during your flight.
- **Avoid comparing time zones.** It's tempting to constantly ask yourself "what time is it where I came from?" but this is a recipe for disaster. Do the best you can to embrace your new time zone and leave the old one behind. It will be waiting for you when you get back!

Even if you follow all of these guidelines, you are likely to still feel a bit bewildered when you get to your destination. And everyone's different; some of us are very sensitive to jetlag, while others are able to sail from time zone to time zone without blinking an eye. If you're traveling for work, do your best to avoid scheduling important meetings on your day of arrival, and take it easy those first few days. Before you know it you'll have adjusted and you'll be able to enjoy everything your destination has to offer.

If you have any questions about this topic, or if you wish to discuss a personal situation you may be experiencing, we invite you to contact your EAP. Contact details can be found on your EAP brochure or you can call your local operator and request to place a collect call to Canada at 905-886-3605. You will be put in touch with our Care Access Centre who will arrange for help closer to home.