

## JET LAG

*Interval Magazine* printed an article titled “Jettison That Jet Lag” in its Winter 1998 issue. It discussed steps to take to minimize jet lag. These remarks are quoted directly and followed with Ayurvedic approaches.

Flying across multiple time zones, particularly journeying eastward can disturb your biorhythms and bring those feelings of exhaustion, irritability, and disorientation commonly called jet lag. NASA studies suggest that recovery takes one day for every time zone crossed. That’s no way to spend your vacation! While you can’t escape jet lag entirely, here are some ways to minimize it.

**BEFORE YOU GO**—Start adjusting your sleeping / eating schedule a week or so before you leave home. Calculate your expected bedtime at your destination, then adjust your at-home sleeping schedule to match as closely as you comfortably can. You may only be able to move your schedule an hour, but every little bit helps. Shifting your eating schedules toward “destination time” also is beneficial. Be sure to get a full eight hours of sleep the night before you travel. If you take medication on a regular schedule you should consult with your physician about how (or if) to shift timetables. Take a walk or get some other aerobic physical exercise daily during the two to three weeks before your trip. You’ll build up your stamina and increase your resistance to fatigue.

**WHILE ON BOARD**—Drink plenty of water immediately before, during, and after the flight. Pressurized airplane air is typically very dry. It can dehydrate you rapidly, causing diminished blood flow to muscles, reduced kidney function, and fatigue. Some experts recommend that you drink two eight-ounce glasses of water right before departure, then continue sipping throughout your flight—consuming one quart of water for every six hours of flying time. Don’t wait until you feel thirsty; you’ll already be dehydrated by the time thirst kicks in. Avoid consuming caffeine and alcohol, since these are diuretics and contribute to dehydration. Moderately hot herbal teas are great beverages to drink in flight. The liquid rehydrates you internally; the vapors they give off moisturize your nose and skin. Lemon and peppermint extracts have an energizing effect while chamomile is a calmate. Set your watch to your destination’s local time. This helps affirm your mental commitment to resetting your bio-cycle. What the mind accepts, the body adjusts to. Try the light touch--Light, both natural and artificial, has a major effect on resetting your bio-clock. Researchers suggest you can help acclimate your body to your arrival time zone by turning on your overhead lamp during your flight when it is daylight at your destination, and turning off your lamp, closing your window shade, and/or wearing an eye-shade when it is night there. To sleep or not to sleep while flying depends on your arrival time. Snooze if your flight lands in the morning; stay awake if your flight lands in the evening. Exercise as much as possible. Okay, you can’t do any strenuous calisthenics, but you can stroll down the aisle once an hour and do these simple seat exercises. Stretch out your legs, put your heels on the floor and flex your feet up and down ten times. Sit up straight, elbows at your side and forearms parallel to the floor. Clench and unclench your hands ten times. Then raise your hands to your shoulders and lower ten times, without moving your elbows from your side. Relax your neck muscles this way: Sit with your spine very straight. Let your head roll gently forward until your chin is on your chest. Then roll your head around full circle ten times to the right, then times left. (Are you beginning to get strange looks from other passengers? Smile and explain that you’re fending off jet lag.)

**WHEN YOU ARRIVE**—Take it easy until you’ve had a good night’s sleep. This is a good time to sun by the pool, take a leisurely walk around the resort facility, or just sit in a sidewalk caf  and watch the world go by. Leave sports and other strenuous activities for Day Two of your vacation. Go native and sleep and eat when the locals sleep and eat. Seek the light♀ Get out into natural light as soon as you can after arrival. Light may be the single biggest factor in helping you recover from jet lag.

Ayurveda suggests taking 1-2 capsules of dry ginger powder an hour before takeoff, during mid-flight if longer than 6 hours, and at the end of long flights to help keep digestive energy up to par. Counter to the suggestion in article above water intake should be governed by self-referral--drink as you have thirst. Some may need no water at all because of state of the physiology while others may need even more than suggested. Try to eat on the plane at times that match meal times of your destination. Bringing meal(s) for this purpose may facilitate this but consider not eating during the flight as a preference. An herbal mixture of nervines from the following may help the nervous system accommodate travel better—brahmi, jatamansi, bh ngar j, vaca, a vagandha, gotu kola,  ankhapu pi, akarakarava, jyoti mati, and kapikacchu.