



We've all experienced it. Tired and cranky, we just can't close our wide-open bloodshot eyes and get some rest. Jet lag is not just a lack of sleep while traveling. It involves your body's objection when not allowed to have its normal routine. It demands eight hours of uninterrupted sleep at the same time every 24 hours, or it will give you lots of trouble.

Jet lag often shows up as one or more symptoms: headaches, eye strain, upset stomach and/or confusion, and when there are schedule problems, anxiety and frustration-fueled anger. There are ways to help your head and body to stop punishing you and help you fight jet lag.

1. Before you travel, practice changing your sleep schedules several times to anticipate a night in the sky or on the road. For example, if you plan to fly or drive red-eye, for several days before you go, try to have your regular sleep from 4 pm to midnight. This may help ease the adjustment.
2. Once on your way, make yourself as comfy as you can in your seat if your trip will be for more than five continuous hours. If you're driving, pull into a lighted service station and curl up in the back seat every couple of hours. A good nap while in flight or on the road, even for just a couple of hours, helps fight jet lag. If you have trouble nodding off, get prescription sleeping pills from your doctor, and use them only when really necessary.
3. When you're flying, consider red eye (late night) schedules. Check with your neighborhood or online travel agency. Red eye ticket prices are cheaper, roads to the airport are less traveled, and the waiting room is less crowded. If you've never flown red eye before, give it a try.
4. If you do experience the symptoms of jet lag while flying or driving, the best way to fight them is to try to relax. A light snack with a cup of decaffeinated tea can help. Whatever you do, stay away from beer and booze. That will only make the situation worse, especially if you're driving.

5. How you nap while flying or in the back seat of your safely-parked car is important. If possible, stretch out to full length. You can't do that on a full flight, but if there are empty seats, ask the flight attendant to let you use a row to stretch out. Take off your shoes and cover yourself with a coat or blanket.

Turn off the overhead light, or better still, take along a sleep mask and noise-reducing earphones. Before you snooze, if you're on a long flight, first change your watch to the new time zone, so that when you wake up, you can more easily adjust to the new hours.