

Table 2. Recommendations for Minimizing Jet Lag and Travel Fatigue.

Strategy	Traveling Westward	Traveling Eastward
Before travel		
Begin to reset the body clock	If possible, shift the timing of sleep to 1–2 hr later for a few days before the trip; seek exposure to bright light in the evening	If possible, shift the timing of sleep to 1–2 hr earlier for a few days before the trip; seek exposure to bright light in the morning
Try to get an adequate amount of sleep	Do not leaving packing and other travel preparations to the last minute; if possible, schedule a flight at a time that will not cut short the sleep time before travel	
In flight		
Try to optimize comfort	Travel in business class or first class, if financially feasible	
Drink judiciously	Drink a lot of water to remain hydrated; minimize consumption of caffeine if you expect to sleep; do not drink alcohol if you intend to take a sleeping pill during the flight	
Use a sleeping medication, if necessary	Consider a short-acting sleeping pill (e.g., zaleplon [Sonata, King Pharmaceuticals] at a dose of 5–10 mg) to promote sleep during the flight; a longer-acting sleeping pill ([e.g., zolpidem [Ambien, Sanofi-Aventis] or eszopiclone [Lunesta, Sepracor]) could result in grogginess on arrival; a sleeping pill should not be taken if there is a risk of deep-vein thrombosis, and it should not be combined with alcohol	
Take measures to avoid deep-vein thrombosis	Because sitting immobile for a long time can increase the risk of a blood clot, change positions frequently and walk around when possible; if you are prone to blood clots, consult a physician, since a more specific preventive measure may be needed (e.g., using anti-embolism stockings)	
On arrival		
Be prepared for changes in sleep pattern	Expect to have trouble staying asleep until you have become adapted to local time	Expect to have trouble falling asleep until you have become adapted to local time
Take appropriate naps	If you are sleep-deprived because of an overnight flight, take a nap after arrival at your destination; on subsequent days, take daytime naps if you are sleepy, but keep them as short as possible (20–30 min) in order not to undermine nighttime sleep	
Use sleeping medication, if necessary	Consider taking a sleeping medication (e.g., zolpidem [Ambien] or eszopiclone [Lunesta]) at bedtime for a few nights until you have adjusted to local time	
Take melatonin	To promote shifting of the body clock to a later time, take 0.5 mg (a short-acting dose) during the second half of the night until you have become adapted to local time	To promote shifting of the body clock to an earlier time, take 0.5–3 mg at local bedtime nightly until you have become adapted to local time
Seek appropriately timed exposure to light	Seek exposure to bright light in the evening	Seek exposure to bright light in the morning
After crossing more than eight time zones, avoid light at times when it may inhibit adaptation*	For the first 2 days after arrival, avoid bright light for 2–3 hours before dusk; starting on the third day, seek exposure to bright light in the evening	For the first 2 days after arrival, avoid bright light for the first 2–3 hr after dawn; starting on the third day, seek exposure to bright light in the morning
Drink caffeinated drinks judiciously	Caffeine will increase daytime alertness, but avoid it after midday since it may undermine nighttime sleep	

* This strategy is based on the theory that after a person crosses eight or more time zones, the circadian system may initially misinterpret “dawn” as “dusk” (or vice versa)