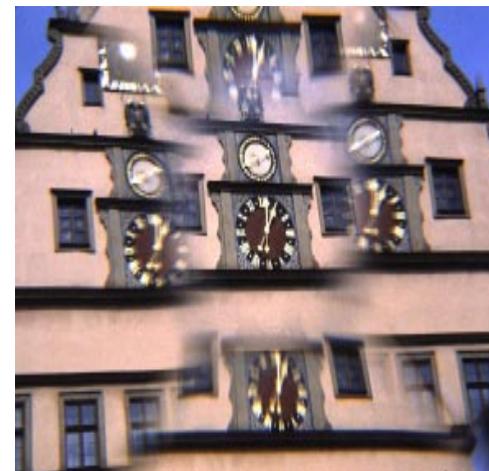


Jet Lag



Anyone who has flown across several time zones has experienced jet lag. This mismatch between the time your body clock is set to....and the actual time at your destination....can take days to overcome. For example, if you arrive in Europe from Chicago, your body may expect it to be midnight, but your eyes perceive it is 6 a.m. Your body is tired, and yet, you have a whole day ahead in Europe. If you sleep too long upon arrival, then when bedtime arrives, you're not tired. Jet lag produces fatigue, lack of alertness, loss of stamina and reduced productivity. The strategies in this brochure won't cure jet lag, but may help you overcome its effects and sleep better.

If you plan to be away from home for less than 3 days, try to stay on your home time. Sleep and eat when you normally would at home and keep your watch set to home time. However, if that is not possible or if you are away longer, here are some suggestions to cut your recovery time. A two-day schedule for traveling up to 9 hours east or west is provided. If you travel farther than 9 hours, either schedule can help.



For more information on Jet Lag, Sleep Management Techniques or any of the 500 other research areas that we at Armstrong Lab specialize in, call us at:

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Perfecting the Human Side of Technology

Travel East

If you travel east across 6-9 time zones your body clock must advance....you will be trying to sleep when your body is set to be awake. (All times are local)

Day 1 at destination — Take a long nap (3-4 hours) sometime between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Be careful not to exceed 4 hours. Begin your nighttime sleep as close to 9 p.m. as possible and get up as close to 5 a.m. as possible. Go outside in the fresh air, but avoid prolonged (20 minutes) sunlight exposure before 1 p.m. Be sure to wear sunglasses. After 1 p.m. go out and enjoy the sun. A brisk afternoon walk is helpful.

Day 2 at destination — Take a short nap (30-40 minutes) sometime between 11a.m. and 1p.m. Try to get to bed around 10 p.m. and get up around 6 a.m. Again, avoid prolonged sunlight until after 1 p.m. Another brisk walk and lots of fresh air speeds your adjustment. After the second day, try to eat and sleep on the local time schedule and be consistent in your sleep and wake times. If you are still tired the next day, try a short nap during lunch time.

Travel West

If you travel west 6-9 time zones your body clock must delay....you are sleeping when your body is receptive to sleep. Most travelers find going west much easier than going east.

Day 1 at destination — If you are tired, take a short nap (30-40 minutes) between 2 and 6 p.m. Avoid taking a longer nap. Get to bed around 8 p.m. and get up as close to 4 a.m. as possible. Get out in the fresh air. Take a morning walk. Avoid the sunlight after 4 p.m.

Day 2 at destination — Take a short nap between 12 and 3 p.m. Go to bed around 10 p.m. and get up around 6 a.m. Try to keep this schedule of sleep for the remainder of your visit. Walks, fresh air and short naps help if you get tired during the day.

Sleep Smarter

Sleep is a basic human need, like eating but more compelling. To be at our best, most of us need 7-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night.

If you are accumulating a “sleep debt” and feel tired, here are some recommendations to help you sleep better:

Sleep at consistent times. You will sleep better if you go to bed and wake up at the same time, including weekends.

Avoid alcohol, especially during the 2-3 hours before bed.

Avoid stimulants (coffee, chocolate, soft drinks, tea) during the 3-5 hours before bed. Find out if any drugs you take impair sleep (for example, some decongestants and anti-inflammatory drugs).

A warm bath, brushing your teeth or just washing your face and hands can make you more comfortable.

Stay in shape.

For dinner, eat foods that may help promote sleep--complex carbohydrates (pastas, potatoes, breads) and foods rich in tryptophan (fowl, legumes). Avoid large meals within three hours of bedtime.

Don't prop your head too high on the pillow.

Make your sleep environment comfortable -- set the room temperature slightly higher and darken the room.

Relaxation Tips

Sometimes the key to restful sleep is relaxation. Here are some tips.

Lie comfortably on your back. Close your eyes and take slow deep breaths. Try to use your stomach muscles, not chest, to breathe in and out. Inhale slowly for about 4 seconds, hold your breath for 2 seconds and exhale for 4 seconds. Start with 4 or 5 of these relaxing breaths until you feel comfortable with this technique.

While breathing deeply, visualize a very pleasant but simple scene.

Tense and relax each muscle group in order: fists, then arms, shoulders and upper back, face, toes and feet, calves, thighs, buttocks, lower back and stomach. Squeeze each muscle group, simultaneously on the right and left sides of your body, as hard as you can, for about 4 seconds. Then take a few deep breaths.