

What is Travel Fatigue?

Long distance travel, irrespective of the number of time zones crossed, is likely to result in travel fatigue. A feeling of extreme tiredness may occur following travel due to a combination of disruption to normal routine, sleep and eating patterns; boredom; cramped conditions; travel stress and dehydration.



What is Jet Lag?

Travel across multiple time zones in an easterly or westerly direction results in a specific form of fatigue associated with disruptions to the body's daily (circadian) rhythm, caused by a difference between the body's internal 'clock' which is adjusted to the time where you have travelled from, and the actual time in your destination. The human circadian rhythm is tuned to enhance activity and performance during daylight hours and to promote sleep and recovery during hours of darkness, though it takes some time to adjust to a new environment, and set of day/night ques. The severity of jet-lag symptoms increases with the number of time zones crossed, and it normally takes 1 day, per time zone crossed, to adjust to the new environment, though individual variations do exist. Travel westward results in less sever symptoms than travelling eastwards.

Symptoms of Jet Lag

- Inability to sleep at night
- Feeling sleepy during the day
- Decrements in mood states
- Loss of appetite
- Irregular bowel movement
- Irritability
- Limited concentration
- Mental confusion
- Disorientation
- Headaches
- Nausea
- General Malaise

Strategies to Overcome Jet Lag and Travel Fatigue

- If you are in control of travel arrangements, and money is no option, avoid early morning departures and long stopovers. Book a seat with extra leg room, or at least an isle seat where you can get up and walk around when you wish. Book flights for a time that will help you adapt to a new routine quicker. Allow adequate time to adapt to the new environment—recommended: 1 hour per time zone crossed.
- Avoid Sleep deprivation in the days leading up to travel. Being tired before you start will not help matters.
- Consider pre-adapting your sleep-wake cycle before you travel. If travelling eastwards, get up a few minutes earlier each day, and go to bed earlier each night, and visa versa.
- If travelling across 10 time zones or more, consider which direction is better for you to travel (but also consider total time travelling).
- As soon as you step onboard, adjust your watch to the time at the final destination; start adjusting straight away.
- Fit into sleep/wake patterns, and meal patterns, of final destination as soon as you arrive, no matter how tired you feel.
- When travelling westwards, make use of evening light by exercising or taking a walk, to stay awake later.
- Sleep in a room with windows, so as to adjust to the light/dark ques quicker.
- During the first few days, training should take place during the overlap period in time zones, to help maintain the quality of training. This may not always be possible.

Lark v Owl

Lark-type personalities (early risers), are better suited to eastward travel, and Owl-types (those who are most active late in the evening), are better suited to westward travel, though neither are exempt from symptoms, no matter what their direction of travel.

What is DVT?

DVT is the clotting of deep veins, usually in the calves, resulting in swollen legs, and more severe consequences if the clots become loose, travel to the lungs, and cause a pulmonary embolism. DVT is most common during long-haul flights, but can occur as a result of any situation involving prolonged sitting and cramped conditions, including car and bus journeys.

How to prevent DVT

- Avoid tight fitting clothing around the legs
- Wear compression socks during the flight
- Take aspirin 300mg prior to the flight
- Avoid sleeping pills
- Exercise regularly during the journey
- Keep well hydrated
- Do **mild** exercise before and after flying

These precautions will not only help prevent DVT, but will also prevent stiffness and help you feel more prepared to compete and train when you arrive at your destination.

Regular walks to the toilet, to get fluids, or to look out of the window will help prevent stiffness and DVT. Heel raises, knee extensions, ankle rotations and light calf and hamstring stretches should also be preformed during the flight.

Don't forget what goes out, must come back

Don't forget that you need to adapt to travel on both the outward, and the home journey. So often, people take particular care to adjust following an outward journey, only to forget all the wonderful advice when they return home.