



Q: I do cross-country air travel quite a bit, and I can't seem to avoid jet lag? Do you have any suggestions?

A: Here are some ideas that may help:

1. If your 4- to 8-hour flight will be a red-eye (after 11 pm), and if they're your normal sleep hours, just try to get solid sleep during the flight. Take along comfy clothes, slippers, sleep mask, ear plugs, pillow and a thin blanket. Once you're in your seat, turn off the overhead light and make yourself comfy. If you've also brought a CD or cassette player, listen to some quiet music to lull you to sleep. Even if you can manage only cat naps throughout the flight, you'll arrive at your destination the morning better refreshed.
2. If the flight isn't sold out, ask the attendant as you board if you can have a seat by yourself, or at least two empty seats across. If your doctor prescribes it, take mild sedative. Of course, if you can spend the dough, go first class or higher to get something resembling a stretch-out bed. Or if you're really rich, get a private compartment and you won't have to worry about sleep masks and cat naps.
3. For a long red-eye flight, eat very little or nothing at all. Drink just small amounts of water or tea. For some people, one alcoholic drink can help them sleep, but five shots in the airport bar before the flight can only cause trouble.
4. If your long flight is in daylight hours, and you'll arrive at your destination at night, don't sleep during the flight. Keep yourself busy with your laptop, DVD player, CD player, books or magazines. If you feel yourself nodding off, get up and walk the aisles for 10 minute and/or go to the back of the plane and do some exercises. Cat naps on these flights are not recommended, but maybe an hour before landing, you can catch some zzzz.
5. If your flights involve drastic changes in time zones, condition yourself for several days before you depart. If you'll be staying in the new time zone for more than a day or two, get used to the upcoming change in your normal sleep cycle. Stay up late and watch midnight TV movies and the obnoxious infomercials. Put one or two exciting DVDs on your TV and watch them all the way through. Take heavy cat naps during the day of from two to four hours each.

If you manage your sleep and waking hours right, you'll be purring like a contented cat when

you reach your destination.