

Jet Lag: Five Steps, One Direction

The five recovery steps Cleveland Clinic names, the pre flight shift by direction, and the honest read on melatonin.

✓ **Verified against published guidance** from Cleveland Clinic, NHLBI & CDC · sources below

Call a healthcare provider if jet lag symptoms do not go away or get worse more than one week after travelling, or if sleep problems start affecting your quality of life. Cleveland Clinic says a provider may recommend a sleep study to check for an underlying sleep disorder.



Do This

Get Some Sun on Arrival

- Daylight jump starts alertness
- A lamp works when you cannot go out
- Light says it is time to be awake

COACH'S TIP The single strongest lever.

Shift Your Bedtime Before You Fly

- Going east: earlier to bed and up
- Several days before departure
- Going west: later to bed and up

COACH'S TIP East is the one worth doing.

Move Your Meal Times Too

- Adjust slowly before the trip
- Cleveland Clinic suggests both
- Match the destination schedule

COACH'S TIP Food is a clock cue as well.

Hold the Local Schedule

- Get on destination time at once
- Keep it on days off too
- Do not ease into it gradually

COACH'S TIP CDC says keep times consistent.

Drink Plenty of Water

- Long flights are dehydrating
- Both make dehydration worse
- Skip caffeine and alcohol

COACH'S TIP Cleveland Clinic on all three.

Set Up the Room for Sleep

- Ear plugs and an eye mask
- No alcohol 2 to 3 hours before bed
- A cool room, good mattress

COACH'S TIP CDC's own short list.



Do Not

Do Not Count on Melatonin

- Not thought to be harmful
- Supplements are not FDA regulated
- But there are no clinical trials

COACH'S TIP Cleveland and NHLBI, in that order.

Do Not Reach for Sleeping Pills

- Prescription strength ones
- Cleveland Clinic says so directly
- May have more downsides than benefits

COACH'S TIP Ask before you fill anything.

Do Not Try New Foods on Day One

- Stick to what you know for a day
- Jet lag hits digestion too
- It may ease stomach symptoms

COACH'S TIP Save the adventure for day three.

Do Not Sleep In to Catch Up

- CDC says go to bed earlier instead
- Even on your days off
- Keep the same wake time

COACH'S TIP Wake time is the anchor.

Do Not Expect to Prevent It

- There is no complete prevention
- Preparation reduces the impact
- No strategy guarantees anything

COACH'S TIP Cleveland Clinic is blunt on this.

Do Not Ignore a Second Week

- Most feel better in a few days
- Longer than that means call
- Some take up to one week

COACH'S TIP One week is the line.

THE NUMBERS BEHIND THIS SHEET

Three figures worth knowing

5 recovery steps, Cleveland

3 time zones to trigger it, Cleveland

1 week outer limit of recovery, Cleveland