

Adjusting to a New Time Zone

When traveling across time zones, adjusting your sleep schedule can be difficult. You may find yourself awake when everyone else is sleeping and nodding off when others are awake. The good news is that you can adjust your biological clock gradually by about 1-2 hours per day until you reach the needed schedule. If you need to be alert upon arrival, you may want to start adjusting gradually before your departure. Here are some tips for traveling across time zones.

- If you need to change your sleep schedule for work or travel, try using an eye mask or heavily lined curtains to block out light during daytime sleep as you adjust.
- If you'll be moving across time zones or need to be alert at arrival, begin to adapt to the new time zone a few days before leaving. If you find it difficult to sleep, try adjusting your sleep time by 15 minutes per day until you are able to sleep closer to the appropriate time in the new zone.
- If you are traveling for just a few days, consider sticking with your regular sleep schedule rather than adjusting to the new time zone. It will allow you to maintain quality and quantity of sleep without much interruption.



Source

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (2006). In brief: Your guide to healthy sleep [on-line]. Retrieved August 6, 2008. From <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/healthysleepfs.pdf>.

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