Beating Long Haul Jet Lag

Long haul flights are always hard on the body, both physically and mentally. And because of that losing a day or two on your holidays is not the way to start your vacation; so here are some tried and true ways to keep from arriving so exhausted that you sleep your first 24 hours away.

And sometimes we sabotage ourselves before we even go! Here are some ways to avoid all that.

1. If you’re doing a major time zone change, try to get onto the time schedule you’re doing to. Meaning go to bed earlier or later, depending on the time at your destination. For example, when I go to Europe it’s an 8 or 9 hour time difference from the West Coast. I start 2 or 3 days in advance, by going to bed hour earlier each night. And then get up earlier as well. Even a few days in advance helps.
2. Pack in advance, not late the night before departure, you will feel frazzled and worry about having missed some vital things. If you take medication, count them out, (plus a few extra just in case) and have all those important things ready well in advance. If you aren’t stressed out and frazzled the night before, you’ll have a better rest that night.
3. The day of your departure, try to get up as close to the time it is at your destination. This isn’t always realistic, but even a few hours’ earlier helps, it makes for a long day, but you’ll be in better shape upon arrival. And you’ll be so tired that sleeping on the plane will be easier!
4. Don’t drink coffee or alcohol when you fly. Rather drink as much water as you can. I usually fill an empty water bottle just before boarding, and then ask the attendants to fill that bottle a few times during the flight. Alcohol, while tempting, will give you a brutal hang over when you arrive, even if you didn’t really consume all that much.
5. If it’s an overnight flight, change the time on your watch/device as soon as you get on the plane. It allows your brain to begin the adjustment.
6. Try to sleep if you can. Use a sleep aid, there’s nothing wrong with it, anything to help you get some serious shut-eye.
7. Wear comfy clothes, shoes that slip on and off, bring neck pillow, a small compact blanket, things that make you feel relaxed. Ear plugs and an eye mask if you struggle with sleep/noise. Make sure you have them easily accessible when you get to your seat.
8. Melatonin, you can take extra doses, apparently if you take it in the morning, it tricks your body into thinking it got more sleep than you actually did.
9. Take vitamins, before you go, and after you arrive, lots of Vitamin C and B12, and while I haven’t tried them, a fellow blogger tried and highly recommended Voke, she took it every day in the morning, and found it gave her a natural boost to keep going.
10. Plan your arrival time if you can, sometimes long hard flights with hours waiting in multiple airports, and arriving after 18 hours of travel, rather than flying direct in 9 hours isn’t worth the $100 you may have saved. Instead you’re twice as wiped out, and you wasted a ton of your precious vacation time sitting in an airport en route.
11. Did I mention, drink as much water as you can?! I bears repeating!