Sleep and Jet Lag Management – Quick Tips

International travel will require planning and circadian adjustment to compensate for jet lag due to crossing multiple time zones. General adaptation strategies include:

**PRE-TRIP PLANNING**
- Getting on the plane in a well-rested state! Don’t pull an all-nighter before the trip.
- Maintaining hydration, good nutrition, and managing stress before travel.
- Use caffeine minimally before travelling. You will need it as a fatigue management tool.

**IN-FLIGHT PLANNING**
- Adjust your watch to the destination time zone as soon as you get on the plane.
- Stay hydrated. Avoid all caffeine and alcohol in-flight.
- It is extremely important to get sleep on the plane. If you are comfortable with sleep medication (and allowed by your sport/sleep physician) take it with your in-flight meal.
- Use ear plugs/noise cancellation headphones and eyeshades to you help sleep.
- Don’t get caught up with in-flight movies/electronics, the blue light will interfere with your sleep!!
- Move around and stretch regularly while not sleeping or doing brain-body resting.

**ARRIVAL PLANNING**
- Make sure you sleep on the destination time zone (i.e. do not sleep through the day).
- Nap briefly (20 minutes) if you become fatigued, try to avoid naps longer than 30 minutes because not only will they interfere with your night-time sleep, but you will find it hard to wake up, and will be sleepy for at least a half-hour after waking.
- If you are really struggling, longer naps may be required (but make sure you have at least 90 minutes between waking and training/competing).
- Keep your sleeping environment like a cave (cool, dark, and quiet). Temperature should be 17-20°C.
- On the first two days, make sure you get light to moderate exercise.
- Make sure you get some time out in the daylight during the day as this will help your body adjust to local day and night time.
- Lots of water and recovery type fluids will be very important in rehydrating your body and preparing you for competition.
- Use caffeine to combat sleepiness.
- If prescribed, use melatonin or sleep medication to combat alertness at night.
- Eat meals according to the new time zone. If you are hungry at an odd time, have a small snack.
- If you wake up in the night and cannot get back to sleep, stay in bed until at least 1h before you were planning on getting up. Do not turn on the lights, do a workout, or grab a meal, because your body will think it is daytime and it will take longer to adjust. If you have to, get up and do a relaxing activity (e.g. bath, stretching, and/or meditation) with the lights off.