

# Keep energy levels high when travelling

 By [Nicholas Barenblatt](#)

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While I enjoy the opportunity to see new places and experience different foods, travelling regularly for work has its challenges in terms of keeping one's energy levels high and a regular routine in check.

I certainly used to struggle with this when I first had to travel internationally for my job, but I've learned a few strategies that really help me cope.

The biggest factor is the time zone issue: being based in South Africa means I'm pretty much dead centre in the world in terms of time zones and so, if I have to go west to the USA where our parent company, Marriott International, is based, I must cross quite a few time zones. And when I've gone off to Australia, it's been the same thing but in an easterly direction.

Since it takes some time for our bodies to adjust to the change in time, I do as much as possible to help my internal system cope. As exciting as it might be to get out and explore a new city or destination, one has to be cognisant of adjusting to the local time; so ensure you listen to your body and get your mindset into the local time as opposed to thinking what time would it be at the origin of where you reside.

## Natural light

A simple thing like making sure that there is natural light around during the daytime helps - I always open curtains in meeting rooms, for instance, and I try to get outside the building to stretch the legs and get some fresh air and vitamin D during the day. So, too, it's not a good thing to have bright lights on when it's dark outside, so I make sure that at night I switch on very few of the hotel bedroom lights.

In a way, light at night is like a stimulant - and the same applies to stimulants such as nicotine, alcohol and caffeine. Because the chemicals in these items stay in one's body for a long time, they can wake you up at night even if you used them much earlier in the day. It's best just to limit them as much as you can.

I've also found that exercising helps a lot when I'm feeling tired after a long flight. I concentrate much better in meetings the day after I've arrived in my destination if I try to keep to an exercise routine which is similar to what I would do at home. The easiest way to do this is to pack a pair of running shoes as they don't take up too much space in one's luggage and you then have the ability to run on a treadmill in the hotel gym or, better still, enjoy experiencing the city with a run around the hood.

## Rest before the trip

Another thing I've learned is that I must have a few solid nights sleep of at least seven or eight hours before I leave on a trip. Being well rested before I start out is a big bonus. I then don't feel the need to drop off at the start of a long-haul flight but often have a nap closer to the end of the flight, leaving me feeling far more rested when I reach the other side.

To ensure that I have a good sleep the night before I leave, I make sure that everything is packed and ready well in advance of the trip so that I don't have to scurry around the night before I leave getting everything ready.

Being properly rested really goes a long way to making a business trip a success.

## ABOUT NICHOLAS BARENBLATT

Nicholas Barenblatt is group marketing manager of Protea Hotels, which is part of Marriott International. Protea Hotels has by a wide margin the largest number of branded properties on the African continent and is represented in seven sub-Saharan countries. It is also the largest hotel brand in South Africa.

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