



# 5 WAYS TO JOLT LOCKDOWN JET LAG

The first lockdown in March last year was almost novel. Working from home, not getting dressed for work each day (hello, leisurewear!).

However, constant change, uncertainty, and ambiguity have killed any novelty, and the longer COVID continues to disrupt our lives, the more people are feeling flat, fatigued and in many cases, like they have a constant case of jetlag.

A participant in one of our 30 Day Boost

programs last week commented, *“Most days I feel jetlagged or slightly hungover. But without the Qantas pyjamas and no champagne on the tarmac.”* I think she summed up how many people are feeling – jetlagged, but without the travel. The key to understanding why you feel like this is first delving into the science of chronobiology (the body clock) then exploring ways to re-energise you and your routine.

### Understanding Your Body Clock

The internal clock, or circadian rhythm, has taken thousands of years to develop; yet our modern lifestyle – with stimulants from electric lighting to caffeine, shift work and alarm clocks – is comparatively new to the

human species. COVID is even ‘newer’ but many of our adaptive behaviours brought on by work from home, home schooling and social distancing – are playing havoc with our internal rhythms.

Circadian rhythms determine the sleeping and feeding patterns of all humans. Brain wave activity, hormonal secretion, body temperature, metabolism, heart rate, blood pressure, cell regeneration and as other important biological activities are linked to this 24-hour cycle. In a regular 24-hour day there are times when energy and alertness levels are at a peak and times you are most likely to feel tired and low in energy. Most people have two peak alertness times each day, around 12 noon and between 6 and 7pm. Almost everyone’s body clock is programmed to make them feel sleepy in the middle of the afternoon (around 3pm).

COVID has changed this. We have lost natural rhythm in our days, weeks, even months. Every day feels the same, without the structure guiding us subconsciously to know what day of the week it is.

### Lockdown Fatigue and Burnout

COVID has exacerbated fatigue and burnout among Australia’s workforce. Anxiety, trauma, and depression are emerging in research studies as big challenges in the fallout of this pandemic. These psychological factors, combined with ongoing questions about how our workplaces will function moving forward, can all play a big part in causing fatigue and increasing the risks associated with burnout. Once you reach that point of exhausting yourself, your health, your productivity, your happiness, your quality of life all plummet, so it’s important to be proactive now.



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Andrew May | CEO | STRIVE STRONGER

### Jolting Lockdown Jetlag

The following five strategies help reset the body clock; create explicit borders that demarcate the start and finish of your working day; add rituals to enhance mental wellbeing; and prioritise activities each week that nurture your soul and connect you to what is important.

- 1. Transition Time.** Create rituals at the end of each working day to transition from work to home. This can include activities like an evening walk, ocean swim, bike ride, warm bath, listen to music or call a family member or friend. Create your own activities that help your body and brain disconnect from work and transition to your personal life
- 2. Daily Sunshine.** Vitamin D is essential for mitochondrial function and cell health, so get outdoors more often. Aim to spend 30 minutes each day in nature, ideally in sunlight to get maximum immune-boosting and mental wellbeing benefits. And do as many walking meetings as you can during the day.
- 3. Go to bed and get up at the same time.** Your body doesn’t know Wednesday from Saturday, changing up your sleep routine messes with your biological clock. Our

circadian rhythm thrives on routine and consistency when it comes to our wake and sleep cycles

- 4. Physical Activity Double Dip.** Regularly train/move with others to strengthen relationships. Exercise is a great way to build physiological capacity, get a dose of nature and connect with other people
- 5. Laughter, fun and play.** Build joy and play into your schedule, especially in weeks of constant back-to-back video conferences and meetings. Watch a comedy, call a friend, go to the park with children, family or friends. Try and focus on the good things in your life and practice gratitude.

**Andrew May is the founder and CEO of StriveStronger and is recognised as one of the world’s leading human performance strategists. He’s the creator of the 30 Day Boost, an evidence-based digital program supporting employees to stay productive, boost physical wellbeing, enhance their psychological resilience and improve team cohesion.**

**Protect your team against burnout and sign them up at <https://www.strivestronger.com/30dayboost>**