



By Katherine De Marco, MS

Fitness on the Go

Does the increase in your frequent flier miles seem to correlate with the increase in your waistline? If your job involves a great deal of travel, you may be all too familiar with the effect a busy schedule can have on your exercise program. Sometimes it may seem there are not enough hours in the day to finish your work, let alone a workout! But with a bit of planning, you *can* fit short exercise sessions into your schedule. Even small amounts of physical activity can help reduce the stress of a hectic travel and work schedule—and might even lead to a more productive business trip.

HOTEL FACILITIES

The most obvious way to continue your training is to stay in a hotel with an on-site fitness facility. Some facilities even offer the services of personal trainers. Several of the larger hotel chains publish booklets that list the exercise and recreational facilities available at their various locations. You can obtain a copy of these guides free by calling the chain's main reservation line. The Automobile Club also provides tour books that list the hotels in a given area and describe the services each hotel has available, including fitness facilities.

LOCAL HEALTH CLUBS

Smaller hotels may not have fitness centers on-site, but they often have agreements with local health clubs to allow guest privileges. Even if your hotel has no arrangements with a local club, you may be able to use a facility for a nominal guest fee. Check the local phone book, or ask the hotel concierge so you will be aware of your options.

If you belong to a health club, ask before you leave for your trip if your club participates in a program that grants visit-

ing privileges at facilities in other locations. The YMCA and some other clubs offer this service. Or do your research at the library or bookstore. A number of helpful books are available, including *Travel Fit* by Steven Shifman, which lists hotels with exercise rooms, pools, courts and other resources; and *The Traveler's Fitness/Health Directory*, published by the National Employee Services and Recreation Association, which also lists the best running parks—and offers a diet to combat jet lag.

IN-ROOM WORKOUTS

Exercising at your convenience in your hotel room may be more appealing to you. Wake up early and exercise with a video you have brought from home or have rented from the hotel. Pack collapsible hand weights and fill them with water for an in-room strength training workout. Elastic exercise bands are also easy to pack and available in varying degrees of resistance. Check your local sporting goods store for collapsible dumbbells, elastic bands and other exercise equipment made specifically for travel. Your trainer can design a workout you can do on your own using these simple pieces of equipment. The book *Travel Fitness* by Rebecca Johnson and Bill Tulin also gives some creative ideas for hotel room workouts (and a seated exercise routine to keep your muscles limber during long airplane flights!).

THROUGHOUT THE DAY

If your time is so tightly scheduled that you cannot fit in an entire exercise session, look for opportunities for physical activity throughout the day. Walk to appointments or around convention centers; use the stairs instead of the elevator; and use breaks during meetings to stretch or take a brisk walk. At banquets and din-

ners, seek out the lower-fat, higher-fiber food choices and avoid the less nutritious food that is often readily available.

SAFETY TIPS

Regardless of where you will be exercising, always take the following safety precautions:

- Carry identification with your name and address, as well as the name and telephone number of the place where you will be staying.

- Dress for the climate, and keep yourself properly hydrated.

- Monitor your heart rate and exertion level during exercise to be sure you aren't exceeding your physical limitations.

- As always, exercise safely and within your fitness level, remembering that travel can take its toll on the body as a result of stressors like changes in time zones, climate and daily schedules. While exercise may help some people cope with these changes, other people may need to slow down a bit.

The primary fitness goals during your trip should be to maintain your current level and to keep your healthy lifestyle intact. So have a great time, and remember that fitness—whether you are traveling or at home—is fun. ●

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