

Staying Fit for Travel

Does your workout routine get out of whack when you travel? With a little planning and determination, you can maintain your fitness levels no matter where you land.

"Many people don't realize the benefits of exercising when they're traveling," says Angela Settle, a Chicago-based personal trainer and creator of the video, 30-Minute Hotel Room Workout. "It can help reduce trip stress, burn extra calories from business meals and help ease the transition into your routine back home. It can also help you maintain regular sleep patterns in foreign beds and minimize effects of jet lag."

Even shorter-than-normal workouts can make a big difference. Getting creative with travel exercise will add variety to your wellness program. Settle offers the following tips for staying healthy and fit while on the road:

1 Do a Condensed but Intense Workout. Create your own 30-minute, in-room workout by choosing three lower-body exercises, such as squats or lunges, and three upper-body exercises, like modified push-ups or chair dips. Warm-up for five minutes by marching or jogging in place, then follow with 10 to 20 repetitions of one lower-body exercise and 10 to 15 reps of one upper-body exercise. Next, do one minute of jumping jacks or jogging in place. Repeat this same routine for a second and third set of exercises. After the three sequences, begin a variety of abdominal crunches, low-back lifts and stretches. Your personal trainer can help choose the right exercises for you.

2 Rehearse Your Routine. You want a travel workout that's easy and automatic—so practice it! Be comfortable with your routine before traveling.

3 Get Active in Airports. Flight delays can benefit your health. Store your carry-on bags in a locker, and hike through the airport while waiting for your flight.

4 Bring Tubes, Bands and More. Before traveling, put any necessary exercise tools in your suitcase, along with favorite fitness videos, comfortable walking shoes, a bathing suit and any other gear you think you might need. Do not forget motivational items, such as written reminders from your trainer or an inspirational audiocassette.

5 Put in Pool Time. Hotel pools work well for exercise. Jogging in the shallow end or dog-paddling in deeper water can elevate your heart rate. When you're traveling, every little bit counts.

6 Get a Jump Rope. Jumping rope is a great way to get a short but beneficial cardio workout—and it can be done in your hotel room. Another great alternative: Walk up as many flights of hotel stairs as possible.

7 Know Your Destination. Consider your destination in advance. Will you be close to a beach, ski resort, good hiking country? By planning ahead, you can come up with appealing adventures. (You may even want to stay extra days to exercise your interests!)

8 Plan to Relax. Do not expect relaxation to happen naturally while you're traveling. Bring soothing audiocassettes and do relaxation breathing exercises on the plane, before you go to sleep and after you wake up. Yoga and t'ai chi exercises also can help you relax at night and rejuvenate in the morning.

9 Pack Healthy Goodies. Bring bottled water, raisins, fruit, vegetables, whole wheat crackers and other healthy snacks. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, soda and salty snacks, all of which dehydrate you. Drink eight ounces of water every hour to help tired, dehydrated muscles.

10 Ease Back Into Your Routine. Depending on how hard you worked out while traveling, gradually get back into your usual routine. You may want to use lighter weights or decrease intensity or duration of your cardio workout for a week or two before returning full force.

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