

Traveling And Staying Fit

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Many fitness enthusiasts find it difficult to follow their normal exercise plan while traveling. Unfamiliar environments, tightly-scheduled business meetings, or lack of exercise equipment may hamper even a fitness fanatic's best intentions for staying fit while on the road. **Franci Cohen is a personal trainer, certified nutritionist, exercise physiologist and creator of SPIDERBANDS®.** When planning your next business trip or vacation, she offers the following tips for putting together an exercise program that travels with you.

If you've worked hard to establish a good fitness routine, going on a business trip doesn't have to mean your healthy habits will be derailed. You can keep your momentum and endorphins flowing and maintain your fitness level when traveling. How? For one thing, keep moving. "Drink a minimum of eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day. Airport food, sitting on a plane, jet lag – all contribute to bloat. The best way to fight it is to stay hydrated," says Franci Cohen.

Use good body mechanics when you lift your suitcases up to the check-in counter. Lift from your knees, not your back. Be aware of your posture as you carry your bags. Even though you've left behind your daily routine, try to eat three meals a day, maintain a balanced diet and eat plenty of fruit and vegetables. If you're going to eat a high-fat meal, eat a smaller portion, or order an appetizer instead of a main course. Split desserts with a friend. Rest. If your schedule is shot and you're not sleeping enough at night, take cat naps whenever you get the chance. Stretch in the morning and evening, especially if you've been sitting all day. If you will be drinking alcohol at business mixers, drink a lot of water between events.

Pack snacks: bananas and apples, yogurt, protein bars. You can make meal replacement shakes in your room. You don't need a blender, just a container with a tight fitting lid, large enough to shake the contents. To find out if your gym reciprocates its membership with a gym where you'll be traveling, log onto the International Physical Fitness Association's Web site, <http://www.ipfa.us/>, or ask at your home health club before you leave town. Franci Cohen says that, "Three to five days off from a strength

routine can give your muscles a rest. But you wouldn't want to go a week or more without serious exercise and a short respite for your biceps doesn't mean you should ever let your cardio workout go."

- Ask your travel agent about hotels that offer fully equipped gyms, pools, and/or other fitness facilities.
- Bring along a CD or iPod with your favorite music and work out in the privacy of your hotel room.
- Pack a jump rope for a go-anywhere aerobic session. Invest in "travel weights" -inflatable weights that can be filled with water or sand when training, folded and stored while on the road.
- Plan active recreation during vacations -check out the local golf course, riding stable, and so on.
- When sightseeing, forget the tour bus and walk. You'll not only see more, but you'll be sneaking in some extra activity.

For more fitness options, place in your luggage a Resist-A-Tube or any of the home exercise tubing, a stability ball, jump rope or exercise video. "If you like classes, make your own class in your room," offers Franci Cohen. If you work with a personal trainer, ask him or her to design an exercise plan before you leave town. When you're sitting on a plane or in a conference room, take deep breaths occasionally, tighten your stomach muscles, then relax. Travelers need to periodically flex and stretch the hamstrings and hip flexors, the muscle at the upper part of the leg that connects into the pelvis. For women who spend the day in high heels, a walk around the room toe-up, heel-down will stretch the calf muscles. Or, do toe raises by putting the heels on the floor and stepping up onto a telephone book. "Men often complain of being cramped when traveling," states Cohen. "They need to stretch their lower back and legs." She recommends the cat stretch. Get up on your hands and knees, arch your back for 15 seconds, then release. Repeat.

Franci Cohen points out that the more comfortable you are with operating fitness machinery at your home gym, the easier it will be to set up unfamiliar equipment when you're on the road.



FIT FLYING

Air travel may be fast and convenient, but for many of us, it can be uncomfortable and restrictive due to cramped cabins and sardine-like seating. The following tips can help you make the most of your next airplane trip by helping you stay flexible and fit while you fly.

- *DEEP BREATHING *is an instant-relaxer and can be done anywhere at any time. Try taking 4-5 deep, cleansing breaths several times during your flight.

- *RELAX YOUR SHOULDERS *by bending forward slightly, hands on knees and “rolling” your shoulders in a circular motion 5 or 6 times. Repeat the “roll” in the opposite direction, then finish up by “shrugging” your shoulders up and down 5 times.

- *RELAX YOUR BACK *by reaching overhead, holding elbows, and bending side to side. Repeat 5 times in each direction.

- *STRETCH YOUR LEGS* by alternately lifting your knees toward your chest and bringing your body toward your knee to the count of eight.

- *RELEASE YOUR FEET* by “drawing” the alphabet with one foot then the other.