

TRAVEL TIPS RESOURCE PACKET

HASSLE-FREE TRAVEL TIPS

Here are some pointers to keep in mind when you travel for business and pleasure. They can help you reduce tension, make good use of travel time and improve your health and security.

Preparing at Home

- If you have family members at home or friendly neighbors, leave phone numbers with them where you can be reached.
- Leave specific instructions, such as household rules and what to do about visitors, medications, meals and activities, for anyone handling child care while you're gone.
- Ask a friend or neighbor to pick up mail and newspapers. If that's not possible, request that your mail be held and that newspaper delivery be suspended while you're gone. But avoid displaying notes on your front door.
- Travel as lightly as possible, packing items that can do double duty, such as dress shoes that could pass as comfortable walking shoes. Be sure to pack your exercise clothes and any portable exercise gear you may have, such as a jump rope, rubber or elastic tubing, swimming goggles or inflatable weights that can be filled with water.

On the Road or in the Air

- Take breaks to stretch, breathe deeply and shake out the kinks when fatigue starts to set in.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Counteract tension by regularly taking several deep breaths.
- Relax tight muscles by flattening your back against your seat, pulling your stomach in, holding your breath for a count of five and repeating; by rolling and shrugging your shoulders several times; by lifting your chin slightly and opening and closing your mouth as if chewing; by curling your toes, tensing your feet, holding that position and slowly relaxing the muscles; and by repeating this tension/relaxation cycle with different parts of your body.
- Use the radio or stereo in a car and headphones in a plane for stress-busting music or comedy.

At Your Destination

- Dress conservatively, carry your own luggage (and stay with it), and carry travelers checks and credit cards. Opt for accommodations with or near a fitness club, tennis courts, a golf course, a pool or a jogging path. Try to exercise vigorously at least three times a week, 20 to 30 minutes each time. If you jog, carry ID with you.
- When entering a hotel room for the first time, leave the door open while you inspect closets, under beds and in the bathroom. Then close and lock the door.
- Make a mental note of where the fire escapes are.
- Check out the local TV guide for exercise programs. You can get a half-hour workout in the privacy of your own room. Some hotels even offer their own fitness classes for guests.
- Whenever possible, use stairs instead of the elevator, and walk to meetings. Explore the area you're visiting and do any sightseeing you can on foot.
- If you see the sign "Watch out for pickpockets" or if someone asks if you've lost any money, resist the urge to check your purse or pockets. A pickpocket may be watching to see where you keep your money.
- Always keep valuables and important business documents with you.

BUSINESS TRAVEL STRESS-BUSTERS

If you travel a lot for business, you know the routine: stress, stress and more stress.

"Business travel is inherently stressful, but you can reduce your stress by adopting a healthful attitude toward delays and missed meetings, building some personal time into your schedule and learning how to increase your comfort while you're in transit," says Bill Tulin, a San Francisco-based attorney and co-author of "Travel Fitness: Feel Better, Perform Better on the Road."

The payoff for incorporating wellness in your travel plans includes improved physical well-being, mental alertness and better job performance.

The following suggestions can help reduce the stress of travel:

- Avoid connecting flights, peak travel times and busy airports. Take nonstop flights whenever possible to avoid layovers and decrease your chances of delayed or canceled flights. Likewise, avoid travel on Mondays and Fridays and flights that depart or arrive between 7 and 9 a.m. and 4 and 7 p.m.
- Schedule extra time to get there. "If an out-of-town meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m., don't catch a flight that arrives at 9 a.m.," Tulin says. "Instead, give yourself plenty of time to rent a car and make it to your meeting."
- Do a pre-trip workout. "Doing a 15- to 20-minute workout on the day you leave can help you relax and get in shape for the rigors of the road," Tulin says. "The better shape you're in before you leave, the better you'll feel while you're gone."
- Adopt a healthful attitude. There's no use worrying about things you can't control, such as flight delays or canceled flights. "When things go wrong, use the time to catch up on your reading or other work," Tulin says. "To use an airport layover creatively, spend the time contemplating one of your life's goals and brainstorm ways to achieve it."
- Practice deep breathing. "Taking three slow, deep breaths can lower your pulse by five points and help you relax and deal with a highly stressful situation," Tulin says.
- Take time for yourself. Plan ahead to see friends for dinner or lunch when traveling to a distant city. Read a mystery or another kind of book instead of business briefs in the evening. Listen to music instead of sales tapes when driving.
- Create a personal travel mantra. Come up with a positive phrase to help you cope with in-transit stress. For example: Repeating the phrase "I am where I'm supposed to be," may help you relax when a situation beyond your control develops.

Survive your seat

However you travel -- by plane, car, boat or train -- there's no escaping lots of sitting.

To avoid back, neck and leg pain, practice dynamic sitting -- a way of sitting that allows your bones, instead of your muscles and ligaments, to support your body. To sit this way: Slightly arch your lower back and distribute your weight evenly over your pelvic bones. Don't cross your legs. Keep your shoulders and abdomen relaxed and slightly arch your neck.

Choosing a rental car with an adjustable seat is important if you'll be driving a lot. "Your best bet is a car with a seat that has a six-way power-seat adjustment, so you can adjust the seat forward, back, up and down, as well as adjust the tilt of the seat back," Tulin says. "Being able to determine the best seat position for you is crucial to comfort."

NUTRITION TIPS FOR AIR TRAVELERS

Nowadays, airlines are taking great pains to improve the quality and appeal of their in-flight food service. Still, it's not easy to please every passenger. Here are some tips to make in-flight dining more palatable.

- When you book your flight or have it booked, request an alternative to the airline's standard menus. Most airlines now offer more food choices than announced during flight. These include vegetarian, kosher, diabetic, low-sodium, low-fat and low-cholesterol meals. For instance, some airlines will provide fresh fruit and cheese plates or specially prepared light meals. But such fare must be requested in advance, usually at least two days before your flight. These exceptions are normally limited to those who reserved them.
- Another option is to skip the in-flight choices and bring your own. Except for bringing certain fruits and vegetables with you into quarantined destinations, consider brown-bagging your own meal. Fresh fruit, cheese, whole-grain crackers, vegetable sticks and other types of no-mess finger food are easy to pack in plastic wrap. And they stay fresh for several hours without refrigeration. You can still select low-fat milk or fruit juice from the airline's beverage cart to complement your meal.
- If you opt for the airline's standard selections, use some nutritional savvy when making your choice. Avoid entrees that are laden with heavy sauces—they are generally high in fat and calories. If available, choose broiled or baked fish, poultry or lean meat.
- Finally, if air travel normally brings on digestive problems, such as diarrhea, upset stomach, heartburn or constipation, resist the temptation to indulge in foods and beverages that might aggravate your condition.

With a little preparation you can eat as healthily in the air as you would on the ground.

AIR TRAVEL – 4 FAQ'S

Do airlines offer discounted tickets or let you change a ticket if you need to travel because of death or serious illness?

In certain exceptional cases, the airlines will allow nonrefundable tickets to be refunded if you need to cancel your plans because of the illness or death of your traveling companion or a close relative.

Similarly, an airline may offer a discounted fare (sometimes a minor discount, sometimes a generous discount) when a close relative becomes seriously ill or dies, causing you to travel without any advance planning. Who must be ill or have died for you to obtain a bereavement fare varies among airlines. For example, some airlines will give a discounted fare to attend the funeral of a parent, child, sibling, spouse or in-laws only, while other airlines include non-marital partners and their immediate family members.

I recently booked an airline reservation and was given an e-ticket instead of a paper ticket. How will this affect me?

E-tickets aren't really tickets at all, but are reservations for air travel that are kept in the airline's computer system instead of being printed on paper. To get a boarding pass on the day of your flight, you simply present a photo ID and your credit card at the airport.

If you are booked on a single airline and are flying only in the United States, you will most likely have little trouble using your e-ticket. In fact, many find e-tickets to be convenient, since there's no paper ticket to keep track of or lose.

AIR TRAVEL – 4 FAQ’S (Continued)

E-tickets are not foolproof, however, especially if you are traveling internationally. Many countries require that you show some sort of ticket to gain access to a boarding area, and sometimes your e-ticket receipt and itinerary isn't enough. In addition, some countries require that you present a roundtrip ticket at the point of entry -- they want you to visit, but they don't want you to stay. If you have an e-ticket, you might have trouble convincing officials that you have booked passage out of their country. If you do decide to travel internationally by e-ticket, make sure you have your itinerary and your receipt for the ticket with you.

On the domestic front, if your flight is canceled, your airline must first print a paper ticket before it can put you on another airline's flight. This can be time consuming. And, if your airline goes on strike, other airlines that might honor a paper ticket won't accept your e-ticket. If you have an e-ticket and an airline strike is imminent, exchange your e-ticket for a paper ticket as soon as possible.

What should I do if I lose my airline ticket?

Contact the airline immediately. You will be required to fill out a lost-ticket application. The airline will either issue a replacement ticket (after you sign an agreement to reimburse the airline for the cost of the replacement ticket if someone successfully uses your lost ticket) or force you to purchase a replacement ticket at the currently available fare (often outrageously expensive because you do not get any advance purchase discounts). In addition, you usually have to pay some sort of service charge or penalty.

After waiting some time (usually two to six months), the airline will issue you a refund for the price of your replacement ticket (less a handling charge) if your lost ticket was not used during that time.

Does the airline have to compensate me if it bumps me off a flight because of overbooking?

If a flight is overbooked, the airline is required to ask passengers to volunteer to take a later flight. Normally, the airline will offer some kind of incentive such as a free domestic or international round-trip ticket. If an insufficient number of passengers volunteer to be bumped from a flight, the airline must begin involuntary bumping. Generally, passengers with the most recent reservations or those who checked in the latest are the first to be bumped.

If you are bumped, you are entitled to compensation if you have a confirmed reservation (your ticket has an "ok" or something similar in the status column), the scheduled plane has a seating capacity of more than 60 passengers and it is not a charter flight. Even if you meet these requirements, the airline might refuse to compensate you if any of the following is true:

- You did not comply with the airline's ticketing, check-in and reconfirmation requirements
- You are not acceptable for transportation under the airline's usual rules and practices (for example, you are drunk)
- The entire flight was canceled
- A smaller aircraft was substituted for safety or operational reasons
- You refuse an offer to take a seat in a different section (class) of the aircraft at no extra charge, or
- The airline offers to place you on another flight or flights scheduled to reach your final destination within one hour of the scheduled arrival of the original flight.

Claremont distributes this information to provide employees with general behavioral health information. If you have concerns about these or other behavioral health issues, you can call Claremont to arrange for assistance. You will be directed to an appropriate, experienced professional who can offer guidance in a variety of work and personal matters.

For confidential help, call: 800-834-3773 or visit www.claremonteap.com.