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Stay Fit to Travel

by Dr. Brian S. Seaman, DC, FCCSS(C), FICC

Or travel to stay fit – either way, it makes sense.

If planning on travelling it is not only important to plan ahead for your destination but it is also important – perhaps more so – to take stock of your health.

Check List

Here is a short 'to do' list:

- Have you recently had a physical check-up/examination with your family physician?
- Did you have blood work done?
- Do your medications need to be updated, filled by your pharmacist or checked by your family physician?
- Have you had a tetanus shot in the past 10 years. If not, get another.
- Have you had shots for Hepatitis A? Hepatitis B? If you haven't or are not sure, check with your family physician.
- Check with your family physician as to any other shots you should have if you plan to travel in foreign countries.
- Is your will up to date? If not, check with your lawyer.
- Have you provided an itinerary of your trip to a family member or close friend? Please be sure to include where you are stay and phone numbers (or e-mail addresses) as well.

Health and Fitness

It is important to remain healthy over the years, especially as we get older and want to travel a bit. Staying fit to travel is important.

First of all, you do not want an injury, illness or medical condition preventing you from leaving on your trip. Every year, I see patients within days of their vacation, or long awaited holiday, with neck or back pain. Why, you ask? What is the relationship between your trip and a 'bad back'?

As your departure date draws near, most of us tend to try to do too much, or finish up at one last project before leaving. You may also not be sleeping as well due to later nights from your projects at home or at work, so fatigue becomes a factor. Usually it is just a case of trying to do too much and not enough time to do it all. My advice – **Prioritize!** You can only do so much.

The 'Fit' Factor

Going on vacation does not mean you have to be in shape to run a marathon – although my assistant has done that! Be sure to watch your diet and do some type of physical activity on a regular basis – whether it be walking, jogging, swimming, biking, fitness classes or a bit of weight training.

If you are embarking on a new fitness program, and have not exercised for some time, it is important to get a check-up – heart, lungs, blood pressure, and blood work are all important.

Get ready to enjoy your trip and make sure you have health insurance to cover any unexpected costs you may incur – but hopefully not!

And Away We Go...

If traveling overseas to Europe, Asia or Australia be sure to take along a few things to make it easier to sleep on the plane:

- Eye shield (block out the light).
- Ear plugs (foam type; block out the chitter chatter around you).



- Neck pillow (inflatable or soft filled).
- Wear loose clothing and bring a sweater or sweatshirt so you do not get chilled while sleeping on the plane.
- Get a window seat so you can lean up against the wall of the plane cabin (grab a couple of extra pillows when you get on the plane to make yourself more comfortable).

By doing these things, you will hopefully sleep peacefully on the way over and be relatively adjusted to a new time zone. I know this works for me.

Once you arrive, try to stay up that day and maybe go to bed a bit earlier – but not too early.

Traveling to Stay Fit?

Yes, traveling can be a great way to stay fit. When you travel there are generally lots of sights to see, and that means – you guessed it – **walking!** But be sure not to overdo it. When planning your trip allow enough time to sight see at a leisurely pace.

Be sure to take comfortable walking shoes that are appropriate for the area you are visiting. Sneakers are good for most areas but hiking boots are better if you are walking trails, trekking the woodlands of a foreign country, or exploring ancient castles.

If you are going to Europe, be sure not to wear shoes with soles that will slip on wet cobble stones. In some areas, both sidewalks and streets become very slippery when wet. A sprained ankle or broken hip would not be the way to end your vacation.

Most importantly...

Have fun! Enjoy yourself and take lots of pictures to show everyone back home.

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