



The Travel “Fit Kit”

Staying fit on vacation, for most people, is basically an oxymoron. I mean, the whole point of vacation is, well, vacation . . . from everything. And depending on the destination, people actually get in shape for the excursion, only to return (or shortly thereafter) sporting their former physique. The good news is that vacations can be a powerful motivational tool when it comes to sticking to a diet. The bad news is that it often undoes all the hard work, and in a very short time!

Go into maintenance mode

To start off, tell yourself that you are going to come back with basically the same body fat you left with (not lower unless you are going to a fat-farm for your vacation, which is no vacation).

The first step is to understand you are not “dieting” while on vacation (not that you were planning to), which means your food intake can be significantly more than during any diet period without gaining weight if everything else is equal, specifically the amount you move. In other words, if you were averaging moving ~2500 calories/day including workouts, try to keep up the same expenditure without the workout, which simply means walk/move more on vacation than you normally do at home.

As a “rule of thumb”, the calories burned during two hours of normal walking is equivalent to ~ one hour of a combined moderate weight and cardio workout. Also remember that 10 minutes of pacing equates to burning 20-30 calories more than performing the same activity seated. So why sit if you can stand or walk?

The main point you want to stay focused on is that the more you move the more you get to eat without gaining weight! And generally the more you move during vacation, the more you see and do and thus the greater the fun and memories – be a kid for a couple of weeks, because you can and nobody knows you.

What to pack

The most important item is a good pair of walking shoes in order to feel comfortable while strolling and to encourage more movement.

The next item of importance is a pedometer (hopefully you have a bodybugg™, which counts your steps while accurately displaying all the calories you burn throughout the day). The purpose of the step counter is not to have you exercise but to “remind” or motivate you to walk when you can and have fun with the numbers throughout and at the end of the day. You will be amazed at how much more you move when you get instant feedback. That’s truly all you need for your exercise component of your trip unless you want to workout privately in your hotel room, then bring along a ball and bands kit (balls are available for order from myApex.com). Follow the enclosed workout instructions and you’re good to go.

And lastly, pack Apex healthy snacks because you will be using them for many meals in order to “save room” (calories) for daily dining experiences, as you will see later on in this newsletter.

Traveling by car

Don’t bring high calorie snacks (e.g. potato chip, bags of candies, caloric drinks, etc.) because you will consume them—mainly because you’re bored, not hungry. You may have an Apex snack in the car if you absolutely need it—but only one. Eat a regular meal before you get in the car and trust me, you don’t need to eat anymore until you stop for gas because you are doing nothing but sitting and moving your eyes. At your first stop it may be time to eat, but move around as much as possible until you have to get back on the road and eat light unless you are at your final destination and you planned a big meal.

Traveling by plane

I have to travel by airplane so often that I made a rule: never sit in an airport, always stand or pace.

As long as you are traveling with someone, they can watch your carry-ons while you roam the airport and people watch. If by yourself, do the same but carry your luggage with you—yes even the ones with wheels you can pick up and carry if you don't mind looking stupid. The outcome is similar to a mild resistant training workout and will add to your normal walking calorie burn.

When you get off the plane, please don't state or think what most people say, which is "I am exhausted from all that travel!" I've got news for you—you didn't do anything (the plane did it all) but sit, therefore you should be getting off the plane ready to run your head through a wall, not sit down AGAIN.

Hotel stay

As soon as you get to the hotel ask the people at the desk how to navigate the stairway because you are going to use them whenever possible. Hotels are notorious for "hiding" the stairs or discouraging their use by locking doors so you can't figure out how to get back in once you have entered the stairwell. I make the rule that if my room is on the 6th floor or lower, I will always use the stairs (unless I have to carry a ton of baggage). You can also roam the hotel, including the stairs, if you have free time or need to burn a few more calories before dinner. Your meal always tastes better when you feel you've earned it.

Eating out

I love to dine out as much as anybody (maybe more). Depending on where I am or what I want to experience that day, I will pick one meal, a breakfast, lunch or dinner, to be the dining experience or what I like to call the "big one." I will fully participate in the moment and generally consume enough calories to power the airplane home! The rest of the day is left to walking or sightseeing, with portion control, low-calorie snacking (Apex stuff) or very small, healthy meals. The next day, pick another mealtime to

get fully engaged in dining. You can follow this plan while on a cruise as well; simply stock your cabin with Apex healthy snacks (especially breakfast squares) and save your appetite for the "big one." And as I mentioned, try to earn it by doing both the "saving room for the calories thing" and moving as much as possible before or after (maybe the next day if it's too late) the experience. There is nothing like a midnight stroll (unless you have to do it with 9, 11 and 13-year-old kids who never stop fighting, but then I burn extra calories refereeing and yelling).

Final note: Don't completely starve yourself before the "big one" because you may not enjoy other parts of day or become too fixated on the upcoming meal and consume so much that you remain uncomfortable. So add some snacks or very small meals in order to take the "edge off" a voracious appetite.

Summary

Coming back from vacation is generally a bit of a bummer. But if you improved your fitness before you left and returned with close to the same body, you will be amazed at how much better you will feel and how easy it is to get back in the groove, as opposed to returning with the old physique beginning to reappear, thus putting you back into the "old everyday mindset" of waiting for another vacation.

Therefore, if necessary, use that upcoming vacation date as the motivation to get in shape, but don't let the vacation period completely undo your current "get in-shape" thought process. Implement my tips, which allow for maximizing the vacation experience while keeping your body close to a "holding pattern." Exercise is any kind of movement, so think of the trip as also being a very fun and new form of exercise. After all, during a vacation you should be moving your body against gravity in far more exciting places and certainly more often than you normally would in the workplace—or gym for that matter. And always remember: Every calorie out (burned) cancels a calorie in (consumed) no matter how you do it. So have fun!

Neal