

wellness works!

The Road Warrior: Staying Healthy on the Road



By Dr. Kim

WHEN YOU'RE ON the road for business, it's easy to focus solely on work and give yourself a pass when it comes to healthy habits. But you'd be doing yourself a disservice: not only will your productivity take a hit, so will your overall health. If you spend lots of time on the road, try to be mindful of your road-warrior lifestyle. After all you're on a working trip – not a vacation – and taking care of your body and mind will keep you productive.

Being somewhat of a frequent flier myself, I've devised a plan that makes it easy to stay healthy and feel great – and get down to business. The plan targets three main aspects: food, mood and fitness. If you pay attention to each and every day, you'll stay energized during workdays and return home ready for action, not ready to nap.

FOOD

Boardroom donuts, roadside fast food, decadent client meals ... business travel is full of temptations that can derail even the best of intentions. The trick is to eat mindfully, not mindlessly. Plan ahead and eat regularly so you don't get to the point of being starving, impacting your ability to focus. Keep these tips in mind:

- **Time It:** Eat every three to four hours, including three meals a day and healthy snacks between meals.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Carry a refillable water bottle with you. On planes, avoid salty foods and caffeine, which can both be dehydrating, cause headaches and dry

skin. And consider your destination: you'll have to increase your water intake in dry climates such as Las Vegas.

- **Choose Wisely:** Steer toward nutritious choices at buffets, restaurants and room service items.
- **Keep Tabs on Yourself:** Consider a food-tracking app to count calories and log meals, snacks and caffeine.

MOOD (MINDFULNESS)

Being in a calm, confident state of mind helps you deal with work stress and the unpredictable nature of business travel. That's where mindfulness comes in. It's a structured way to give your mind space amid the chaos. As much as you may think that you have to cram work into every moment you're on the road, taking a moment to let yourself get perspective and rest your mind will actually help you be more productive and focused. Mindfulness is about being fully present and alive in the moment – right here, right now. When you're faced with stressful situation, take some deep breaths and respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively. And mindfulness is perfect for business: it can be done in a taxi and at the baggage claim; even a one-minute break can relieve tension and help regain focus.

FITNESS

Fitting exercise into your travels is much simpler if you redefine your notion of fitness. Newsflash: You don't need to sweat for hours in the hotel gym to reap the benefits. Short bursts of activity

throughout the day can make a huge impact on your energy and fitness levels.

One of my favorite strategies is active transportation: Choose walking over the moving airport walkway; climb stairs instead of taking an elevator; and walk to your meeting or evening activity rather than take a cab or shuttle. You can also intentionally break up bouts of sitting by walking the aisles on a flight, scheduling walking stops on road trips, and taking meetings to a trail instead of to a boardroom.

Consider wellness options when booking a hotel: Does it have a pool or gym and walking-friendly surroundings? And when you pack, throw in some resistance bands or a skipping rope for a quick in-room workout. Forgot your workout gear? Many hotels deliver right to your room. You can also start your day with a sun salutation or a few jumping jacks and crunches. Or blast some tunes and dance like no one's watching – because no one is!

Any lifestyle change takes time and trail and error. So don't beat yourself up if your journey to being to a healthy road warrior has some bumps and detours. Just put it behind you and keep your eyes on the road ahead! ■

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