

Theme: Healthy Travel Habits

Exercising While on the Road

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Letter from the Editor

A. Lynn Millar, PT, Ph.D., FACSM

Thank you for reading the *ACSM Fit Society® Page*. In this issue, you will read advice about staying healthy and fit while traveling when time and resources are limited. I can personally attest that preplanning and some simple activities can help you stay active while traveling. Having just returned from a trip to Saudi Arabia where I was not able to go outside for my normal activities, bringing along rubber tubing and having a set exercise routine for my room that also utilized the stair and hallway space kept my fitness on track.

After you have read this information that ACSM experts have prepared for you, please feel free to share it with friends and family. We hope these articles will help as you pursue a healthy and active life.

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Advancements in technology have made our world smaller. Face-to-face meetings and handshakes have changed into texts, emails and FaceTime. Even with instant electronic access, sitting across the boardroom table still is the best way to communicate. Most of us have experienced the sedentary nature of travel for business or vacation. **One day of skipped exercise is not the end of life, but choosing how to use our time is important when we arrive at our destination.**

Exercise for travelers with high stress and unpredictable schedules should be designed to accommodate individuals who are short on time and don't have access to a gym or equipment. When in the car for long hours, use the moment after filling the car or the rest stops to engage in some quick exercises. Bodyweight calisthenics and exercises like squats, push-ups, crunches, burpees and squat-thrusts are easy choices, if some smooth ground is available, because they require no equipment. Performing these exercises at high intensity will give you the maximum benefit. For those who are not quite as fit, some simple stretches and walking around will help keep the blood flowing and reduce stiffness.

If you have time on the road, search out short hikes or activities that you can use along the way to take a break from driving and insert some physical activity. This is also a great way to see some of the local sights. Another idea is to plan a short half-hour walk during a meal break, or once you have reached your destination (so long as it is not too late...).

When seated for an extended time in the car you can perform isometric exercises by contracting muscles without a joint actually moving (like flexing). And, similar to bodyweight workouts, no equipment is required. Last year while traveling for the ACSM conference, I was able to perform crunches, chest, back and leg resistance training while flying at 30,000 feet above the ground. Two isometric exercise examples are pressing the palms of your hands together as firmly as you can to engage your chest muscles or stretching your arms wide apart to target your back. Gluteal squeezes can help the low back during long drives or flights. Hold each isometric exercise for approximately ten seconds and breathe naturally. These minor exercises can be effective in reducing the effects of being sedentary.

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Exercising While on the Road (continued from page 1)

Remaining creative with exercises and having a flexible attitude can provide the keys to getting a workout in while on the road. Seeking the perfect exercise session like you get when home might not be realistic. While on traveling, keep realistic goals for exercise—a little is better than nothing. Sometimes a break from the routine can generate a new enjoyment for the simplicity of exercise again.



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Staying Active By Airport Walking

Virginia Frederick



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Spring is here once again and that often means gearing up for travel season! Whether traveling for business or pleasure, chances are that many of us will find ourselves in an airport at some point in the coming months. While travel days can sometimes be chaotic as you try to get to the airport on time, haul luggage in and out of the car and make sure you have not accidentally left any of the necessities at home (even though you triple-checked to make sure you have your phone charger), incorporating walking as part of your experience can have many benefits. Here are some of the ways walking can benefit you and your family during travel:

1. **Meet physical activity guidelines** – Current guidelines recommend that adults accumulate the equivalent of 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical

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Anywhere Fitness

Sue Brown



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Summer travel brings images of the seashore or the mountains and all the activities of the great outdoors; swimming, boating, hiking, biking and fresh air. In reality, travel isn't always so picture-postcard perfect, so if you're taking a trip that doesn't include physical activity, a little creativity and resourcefulness will be necessary to stay on top of your game.

Probably the biggest obstacle to keeping active while traveling is the extended amount of time spent sitting. Long flights, train trips and hours behind the wheel of a car are just some examples. There are also itineraries that keep you sedentary, such as the many hours in conference sessions associated with business travel. When you add in the reduced access to exercise accommodations, you can really lose ground regarding your fitness goals. But there are ways to overcome these snags.

Before you leave on your trip take account of what your surroundings will be. Does the hotel where you are staying have a fitness center? A pool? Is there a park nearby where you can take an energizing jog? Park benches are excellent props for incline pushups, squats, seated leg lifts and other bodyweight exercises. Pack your work out gear so that you can take advantage of these settings and keeping active will be easy.

The truth is, if you have space enough to move, you can insert a little exercise. Walking is probably the most versatile, and a vigorous daily walk is a recognized way to stay fit. You can walk the airport, or the hallways of your hotel or its neighboring streets. Do a heel to toe pace, rolling through the foot and pushing off the toes; pump your arms to increase the heart rate; alternate with lunges to work the leg muscles.

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activity, such as walking. This activity can be accumulated in sessions as short as ten minutes. Regularly engaging in this amount of physical activity can reduce the risk of many chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. It is important to realize that even on days when you're traveling, the airport can be a great place to sneak in some physical activity. For example, you can choose to walk to your departure gate instead of riding a train or shuttle. In addition, if you arrive to the airport early or have time between connecting flights, you can use that time to walk around instead of sitting at the gate.

2. Relieve stress – Beyond the multitude of health benefits offered by engaging in regular physical activity, walking while at the airport can help relieve some of the stress associated with travel. If you are a nervous flyer, taking a walk through the airport before boarding your flight may help calm you and improve your mood. In addition, if you are traveling with children, walking around the airport is a great way to let them release some energy before takeoff. Walking before and between flights may also be beneficial for anyone who suffers from circulatory problems, improving blood flow before a long flight.

3. Find adventure – Many airports across the U.S. have art and culture exhibits set up for visitors to enjoy. Some focus on the history of the city or the airport itself, giving visitors a chance to experience the city without ever leaving the airport. Other airports display impressive artwork from local artists or keep children occupied during long waits with interactive exhibits. Doing a bit of pre-travel research about the airport out of which you will be flying or connecting could provide you with an idea of any art or cultural exhibits you may want to check out!

Next time you are headed to the airport, make sure to take a comfortable pair of shoes so you can walk, de-stress and enjoy the journey.

Quick Tips:

- If you are traveling for business and footwear is an issue, pack a pair of comfortable shoes in your carry-on bag so you can quickly change to walk around.
- You can always ask an airport employee if there is a way to get to your departure gate or desired destination by walking instead of taking a train or shuttle.
- Check out the website of the airports from which you will be departing or connecting to see what kind of art or cultural exhibits they may have!
- If traveling with others, take turns walking in smaller groups so you can watch each other's luggage.

When you are in the room, a circuit work out is an excellent way to make effective use of downtime. Without a single prop, you can perform a circuit which combines:

- squats
- lunges
- knee lifts
- plank holds
- roll ups

Consider purchasing something portable—such as exercise bands or tubing. Most sporting goods stores and department stores sell them. They are inexpensive and offer an easy way to add resistance to your routine. They also come with exercise examples and descriptions. Handy! If you like direction, there are many video workouts that can be downloaded or streamed to your computer or portable device.

Turning downtime into a quick, refreshing work out is easy if you think about it; but it requires commitment, because it's also easy not to exercise. Decide what your plan will be, schedule it into your daily agenda and set reminders. That way you'll be sure to stay in top form while you're away.

Theme: Healthy Travel Habits

Q&A

James MacDonald, M.D., FACSM



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Q: I am planning on running the Berlin marathon later this year. I will be coming from the West Coast. I have a good base of training and will be ready for this event with regards to my conditioning. However, I have a tight schedule and I am flying in only two days before the event. How can I optimize my performance/minimize the effects of jet lag so I can do my best on race day?

Good luck in your endeavor. We hope you meet, or exceed, the goals you have set for yourself!

You are right to think ahead about this issue of travel over thousands of miles and several time zones—the best training can be undercut by the effects of jet lag and the associated fatigue and sleep deprivation.

The “skinny” on jet lag is that it can have a profoundly negative effect on sports performance, and the most effective management of the problem centers on pre-flight adaptation to the destination time zone (though the associated interventions are not always the most practical).

The cited resources elaborate on some of the specific options you may choose to help you with your specific itinerary (West Coast U.S. – Berlin), but in general here are some of the important points:

- 1) Pre-flight:
 - a. Consider altering your schedule as much as seven days prior to departure (this will involve timing of sleep, timing of light exposure and considering the use of melatonin).
 - b. Above all, head into your travel well rested: this will reduce the travel debt you will almost inevitably accrue.
- 2) In-flight:
 - a. Adjust watches to the destination time zone.
 - b. As much as possible, eat and sleep according to the daily schedule of the destination time zone.
 - c. Stay well hydrated and avoid caffeine and alcohol.
 - d. Consider the use of eye shades and noise canceling headphones to facilitate sleep.
 - e. Based on information from the cited resources, one may consider use of melatonin and/or use of overhead light in the plane cabin to mimic the circadian rhythm of the destination time zone.
- 3) Post-flight:
 - a. This component of the process can last for two to four days after arrival (i.e., if you have any latitude with your schedule, you are better served arriving four days rather than two days prior to the race in Berlin).
 - b. During this period, you will adapt to local time—attempting to sleep and eat, and do your training taper on a “Berlin schedule.” Using caffeine, melatonin, light exposure and brief napping as indicated are all strategies to help address fatigue.

As with most things pertaining to training, having a plan and anticipating your needs is key to addressing the potential problem of jet lag and travel fatigue. Take a look at the cited resources, make that plan—and best of luck in Berlin!

Q: I am going on a cross-country road trip to start a new job. I will rent a U-Haul and relocate from the West Coast to the East Coast. I have to complete the journey in five days. One of my New Year's resolutions was to get “healthier,” and I worry about what this five-day journey will do to the gains I've

already made in my fitness and my weight management. Do you have any advice that may help me to stay fit as I mostly just sit in a car the next five days?

Driving cross-country, with the associated hours of sedentary behavior combined with the ease of eating junk food and dining at the most convenient fast-food outlet, does have the potential for being a major setback for folks seeking to maintain or improve their health.

But, like much in life, the probable does not have to become the inevitable.

Let's start with eating. It is not difficult in our contemporary society to make healthy choices for the frequent snacking that often accompanies the potential boredom of spending hours on the road. Have available fruit that travels well and stays fresh easily (e.g., apples); bite-sized snacks like carrot sticks; and, depending on your dietary preferences, granola bars, peanut butter crackers, cheese sticks or low-salt beef jerky. Stay hydrated by drinking water and most definitely avoid soda.

When you do get off the road, you can readily find food outlets that provide options that are rich in nutrients rather than "empty," calories. We'd avoid endorsing any one outlet, but seek out those that may have salad bars or those that allow you to choose your own custom-made sandwich, bowl or wrap, where you can pile on the veggies.

Stay active: it's possible, even on the road. It's a good safety practice to take frequent breaks when driving long distances, as doing so will tend to keep you alert. Make those breaks one for health in addition to safety: do a set of push-ups, squats, jumping jacks, or planks. Stretching is helpful to counteract the inevitable muscle tightness that develops when sitting for prolonged periods of time. It would be easy to do these sorts of exercises in a very limited time during these breaks.

And when you get to your destination for the night, take advantage of the workout facility or pool that may exist in your hotel/motel. If you're camping or "crashing" with a buddy, don't forget the friend of the time-crunched athlete: high-intensity interval training (HIIT). There are several apps (e.g., the ["seven-minute workout"](#)) that you can download on your phone that can guide you through a brief, intense workout.

We all know the saying: failing to plan is planning to fail. Go into your cross-country move with a plan; execute it; and when you reach your final destination, you will be in a much better state than you'd be otherwise.

For further reading on the science associated with this issue, as well as some practical management ideas, an excellent and free resource can be found in the May 2012 *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine* study, ["Jet Lag and Travel Fatigue: A Comprehensive Management Plan for Sport Medicine Physicians and High Performance Support Teams."](#) Another excellent resource was produced by ACSM and is also freely available on line: ["Jet Lag: Trends and Coping Strategies."](#)

Meal Timing: Does It Matter When You Eat?

Nancy Clark, MS RD CSSD



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Meals and snacking patterns often need to be altered when traveling. As a result, I get questions from both athletes and non-athletes alike about how to best fuel their bodies: Should I stop eating after 8:00 p.m.? Which is better: to eat three or six meals a day? Does it really matter if I skip breakfast? Because meals can be a central part of our social life—and busy training schedules can contribute to chaotic eating patterns—many athletes disregard the fact that food is more than just fuel. When (and what) you eat impacts your future health (and today's performance).

Food consumption affects the central clock in your brain. This clock controls circadian rhythms and impacts all aspects of metabolism, including how your organs function. Restricting daytime food and eating in chaotic patterns disrupts normal biological rhythms. The end result: erratic meal timing can impact the development of cardiovascular disease (CVD), type-2 diabetes and obesity.

Breakfast: Is It Really the Most Important Meal of the Day?

If you define breakfast as eating 20 to 35 percent of your daily calories within two-hours of waking, about one-fourth of U.S. adults do not eat breakfast. This drop in breakfast consumption over the past 40 years parallels the increase in obesity. Breakfast

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skippers tend to snack impulsively (think donuts, pastries, chips and other fatty foods). They end up with poorer quality diets and increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and overweight/obesity.

Eating a wholesome breakfast starts the day with performance enhancing fuel at the right time for your body's engine. If you exercise in the morning, fuel up by having part of your breakfast before working out and then enjoy the rest of the breakfast afterwards. This will help you get more out of your workout, improve recovery—and click with natural circadian rhythms.

Meal Frequency: Is it Better to Eat 1, 3, 6, 9 or 12 Times a Day?

In terms of weight, eating 2,000 calories divided into 1, 3, 6, 9, or 12 meals doesn't change your body fatness. In a study where breakfast provided 54 percent of the day's calories and dinner only 11 percent of calories—or the reverse, the subjects (women) had no differences in fat loss. Yet, in terms of cardiovascular health, the big breakfast led to significant reductions in metabolic risk factors and better blood glucose control. The bigger breakfast matched food intake to circadian rhythms that regulated metabolism.

Athletes who skimp at breakfast commonly get too hungry and then devour way too many calories of ice cream and cookies. If they do this at night, when the body is poorly programmed to deal with an influx of sweets, they are paving their path to health issues. Hence, if you are eating a lot of calories at night, at least make them low in sugary foods, to match the reduced insulin response in the evening. This is particularly important for shift workers, who eat at odd hours during the night and tend to have a higher rate of heart disease.

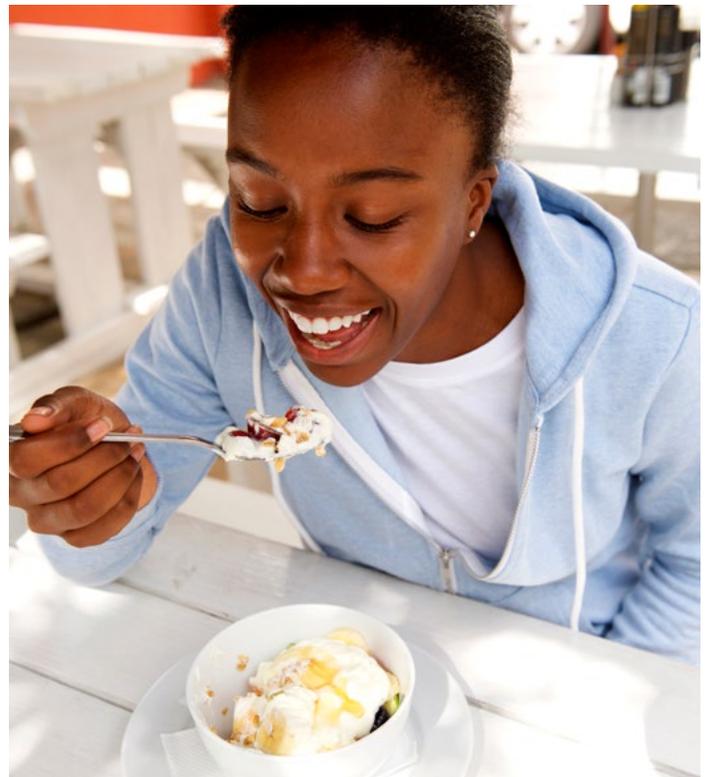
Should you stop eating after 8:00 p.m.? There's little question that late-night eating is associated with obesity. Research with 239 U.S. adults who ate more than one-third of their calories in the evening had twice the risk of being obese. Among 60,000 Japanese adults, the combination of late-night eating plus skipping breakfast was associated with a greater risk of diabetes, heart disease and obesity. A study with 2,200 U.S. middle-aged women reports each 10 percent increase in the number of calories eaten between 5:00 p.m. and midnight was associated with a 3 percent increase in C-reactive protein, a marker of inflammation. Inflammation is associated with diabetes, CVD and obesity. Wise athletes make a habit of eating the majority of their calories earlier in the day, to curb evening eating.

The Best Plan: Plan to Eat Intentionally.

Failing to plan for meals can easily end up in missed meals, chaotic fueling patterns and impaired health, to say nothing of reduced performance. If you struggle with getting your food-act together, consult with a sports dietitian who will help you develop a winning food plan. Use the referral network at www.SCANdpg.org to find a local sports RD.

Instead of holding off to have a big dinner, enjoy food when your body needs the fuel: when it is most active. If you worry you'll eat just as much at night if you eat more during the day (and you'll "get fat"), think again. Be mindful before you eat and ask yourself: Does my body actually need this fuel?

Most active women and men can and should enjoy about 500 to 700 calories four times a day: breakfast, early lunch, second lunch, and dinner. To overcome the fear that this much food will make you fat, reframe your thoughts. You are simply moving calories in your pre- and/or post-dinner snacks into a substantial and wholesome second lunch (such as a peanut butter-honey sandwich, or apple, cheese and crackers). The purpose of this second lunch is to curb your evening appetite, refuel your muscles from your workout earlier in the day (or fuel them for an after-work session) and align your food intake to your circadian rhythms. Give it a try?



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