

## 8 Secrets for Staying Healthy on the Road

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Men's Health

There are plenty of reasons that traveling can sabotage your health. From being exposed to germ-infested airline seats to restaurant meals that are overloaded with calories, it can seem like there's no escaping the on-the-road potholes that leave you run-down and that can make you fat. But turns out, with a few smart strategies, you can return from your trip feeling better than when you left. Whether you're traveling for business or pleasure, here are eight ways to stay healthy and fit while you're away from home.

**1. Don't catch someone else's bug.** Many surfaces in hotel rooms, including the phone, may be contaminated with the cold virus, according to a University of Virginia study. After 15 people with colds spent one night in a hotel, the researchers swabbed everything the congested guests had touched and found the rhinovirus residing on 35 percent of room surfaces. And although the germ count was conducted before housekeeping came knocking, the hot spots—light switches, the phone, and the TV remote—are often only dusted. That's important, because "a person's cold virus can linger on surfaces for at least another day," says researcher Owen Hendley, M.D. Pack a travel can of Lysol spray and annihilate the virus when you arrive.

Extra tip: Watch out for these [10 surprising places](#) (and people) bacteria clings to.

**2. Take cover (with you).** Chances are, seat selection won't improve your odds of surviving a plane crash. (Although a seat near an exit could help in a fire.) You can, however, make your plane seat safer by using a personal cover. [Plane Sheets](#), in both washable and disposable forms, block germs deposited on the headrest or cushions by the thousands of passengers who previously sat in 12A.

**3. Check your fluids.** A jet cabin's air can be dry as the Sahara—as low as 5 percent humidity, according to aircraft manufacturer Boeing. This can lead to excessive nasal dryness, which can trigger tearing of mucous membranes and facilitate infection. For your nostrils, pack an over-the-counter saline gel, like Ayr. To keep your skin hydrated, drink 20 ounces of water while you're in flight, says travel-medicine specialist Terri Rock, M.D.

Extra tip: It's easy to feel bloated when you fly, so steer clear of these [20 sodium-packed foods](#) to avoid in-flight discomfort.

**4. Forget about the menu.** At restaurants, determine your order before you even see the options. "Most people choose with their eyes and not with their heads," says Christopher Mohr, Ph.D., R.D., a personal nutrition consultant in Louisville, Kentucky. At dinner, for example, you should decide that you're ordering a salad as your appetizer, and steak, chicken, or fish with the vegetable of the day for your entrée.

Extra tip: [Ditch the free bread](#), and anything on the list of America's 10 worst appetizers, sides, and starters.

**5. Manage temptation.** When reserving a room at a major hotel, ask for your minifridge to be stocked for a diabetic. "This is a frequent request, and most hotels oblige by swapping out high-sugar junk foods for milk, cheese, vegetables, diet soda, and fruit," says Cynthia Finley, R.D., a clinical dietician at the Johns Hopkins Weight Management Center. The downside? Don't expect a break from the normal in-room price-gouging.

Extra tip: Save money and calories and pack your own arsenal with this list of the [15 best snacks](#) with 100 calories or less.

**6. Keep your laptop on the desk.** "If you work in bed, the bed becomes associated with being awake and active, not sleep and relaxation," says Mark Rosekind, Ph.D., president of Alertness Solutions and a former sleep scientist at NASA. Why is that so important? Because people average 2 to 3 fewer hours of sleep when they travel for business. Not only is that bad for your health, it's bad for your belly. This disturbance in your internal clock decreases your levels of leptin, a hormone that delivers feelings of satiation, and increases ghrelin, a hormone that sparks hunger. "The net effect is that your appetite increases by 23 percent," says Rosekind.

Extra tip: For more simple ways to improve your life, use these [100 perfect fitness training tips](#)—small gems that make a huge difference.

**7. Invite a new client to dinner.** In a recent study, researchers at the State University of New York at Buffalo observed that men downed 35 percent fewer calories when eating with strangers as when breaking bread with friends. If you're eating alone in your room, don't rely on your television for company. University of Massachusetts scientists found that people who watch TV during a meal consume, on average, 288 more calories than those who eat with the boob tube off.

**8. Download a pedometer.** Enter your location, and this Google feature—found at [gmap-pedometer.com](http://gmap-pedometer.com)—allows you to design running routes, complete with mileage on its high-tech satellite maps. So you can get your 3-mile walk or run in anywhere.

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