

16 Easy Ways to Travel Healthier in 2016

From finding challenging new workouts to treating yourself to a day of calming spa treatments, here are *T+L*'s top tips for staying fit while on the road.

by Anya Hoffman December 29, 2015

If you want to improve your health this year, make sure you have a trip or two on the books. Studies have shown that vacationing reduces stress, provides vital mental stimulation, and can even reduce the risk of heart disease. Plus, hotels and travel companies are making the health and wellness of their guests a priority, providing fitness-promoting amenities that range from in-room balance balls to DNA-specific nutrition plans. The bottom line: staying fit and healthy while on the road has never been easier. To reap all of the body-boosting benefits of your next vacation, here are 16 simple ways to travel healthier in the coming year:

1 Book a hotel with in-room wellness offerings.

It's easy to find reasons to skip a workout when you're traveling—you forgot your sneakers, the hotel gym doesn't have a recumbent bike, you just don't feel like it. But many hotels are heading off these exercise barriers by anticipating travelers' every fitness need. At Westin hotels, guests can have New Balance shoes and gear delivered right to their rooms, while Fairmont has Reebok sneakers and workout clothes at the ready for loyalty-club members. The rooms at InterContinental Hotel Group's Even Hotels are equipped with exercise-ready areas with cork flooring, a balance ball, yoga mat, and resistance bands. Other hotels, like London's 45 Park Lane and Toronto's Shangri-La Hotel, provide proprietary video and streaming workouts. Yoga fanatics might want to head to a Kimpton property, which stocks yoga mats in every room (and offers free on-demand fitness programming).

2 Buy a day pass to an insane hotel gym.

You might not be able to stay at the chic Ham Yard Hotel in London for less than \$500 a night, but it only costs \$39 a day to use the property's Sohoistic gym and spa. There are also hotels all over the world that offer non-guests pool access for what is often a very reasonable fee. In the summer, travelers visiting Boston can pay just \$15 to cool off and swim some laps at the Colonnade Hotel's rooftop pool. The price of admission is a tad more at Le Parker Meridien in New York (\$100 from October through May), but a day pass grants non-guests complete access to the luxurious hotel's Gravity fitness center, line-up of classes, and poolside lounge area.

3 Try a new workout.

There's no better time to try a new way of exercising than when you're in a new place. Your brain and body are already primed for novelty—plus you have the chance to sample a workout that might not be offered in your hometown, like the Lithe Method, a cheerleading-inspired class offered at the Stratus Rooftop Lounge at the Hotel Monaco Philadelphia, or the hula-hooping primer offered poolside at London's Berkeley Hotel. One easy way to sample new workouts when you travel is by joining ClassPass, a monthly membership program that lets users access a network of fitness classes in different cities.

4 Download travel-friendly fitness apps.

Before your trip, load up on apps that make it easy to stick to fitness goals, like MyFitnessPal, which logs calories consumed and burned, or Nike Training Club, which offers a selection of workout routines. There are also travel apps and gadgets that keep your health on track in more subtle ways, such as monitoring your water intake or even reminding you to breathe when you're tense.

5 Ensure a good night's sleep.

Forget about Ambien: at Nayara Springs, a boutique hotel in the shadow of Costa Rica's Arenal Volcano, guests can take a candlelit evening yoga class to relax before bed. Similarly, Solage Calistoga in California's Napa Valley offers evening floating meditations under the stars in the resort's open-air geothermal mineral pool. Other hotels are making their rooms as slumber-friendly as possible with features like custom-designed beds, white-noise machines, LED lights, and even special before-bedtime beverages, like the the calming nighttime herbal elixir delivered to Cheval Blanc St-Barth Isle de France guests at turndown.

6 Bounce back from jet lag.

It can take a day or two to adjust to a new time zone, but there are ways to speed up the process. At Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve in Puerto Rico, jet-lagged guests can schedule a "Sweet Surrender" massage, a 60-minute treatment created to help re-set sleep cycles. Marriott's Residence Inn and Courtyard hotels in Lake Nona, Florida, offer special "StayWell" rooms that include jet lag-fighting features such as circadian-rhythm lighting, aromatherapy, and dawn simulations. Similarly, at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, some rooms are outfitted with melatonin-regulating bedside lights. And at many JW Marriott properties worldwide, turndown service includes a vial of Revive Oil, an aromatherapy blend tailored to help guests shake off a long flight.

7 Spend as much time outdoors as possible.

The health benefits of spending time in nature are well-established: according to several scientific studies, being outdoors can help ease depression, improve focus, and strengthen immunity. So instead of spending hours in a hotel gym, try to keep your workouts al fresco the next time you travel, whether that means taking an outdoor yoga class in Philly, or sprinting over sand dunes in Hawaii.

8 Be mindful about what you eat.

Healthy eating doesn't have to mean existing entirely on green juices and poached salmon. According to Whitney Tingle and Danielle DuBoise, co-founders of organic meal delivery service Sakara Life, a little indulgence is part of a balanced approach to food. But save your splurges for foods you really want (like the otherworldly *ispanhan* macaron at Pierre Hermé in Paris, or the 100-layer lasagna at Del Posto in New York). When in doubt, say Tingle and DuBoise, order greens, like one of the salad-in-a-jar options from the vending machines at the Chicago Marriott O'Hare (think: kale with quinoa or lemon-pepper chicken salad). Even cities known for their gastronomic excesses—we're looking at you, New Orleans—can be home to healthy eats. (In the Crescent City, head to Seed for Southern-inspired vegan dishes or City Greens for casual farm-to-table fare.) Try to seek out nutrient-rich foods when you can, while still allowing yourself to enjoy regional treats.

9 Head to a destination spa.

In need of a more intense health tune-up? Even a short stay at a spa or wellness center can have lasting benefits. From the Lodge at Woodloch in the Poconos, where guests can take part in fitness classes and mind-body activities like guided nature walks, to Vana Malsi Estate in Dehradun, India, an eco-conscious resort in the foothills of the Himalayas, there are destination spas all over the world that provide a supportive, immersive environment for jumpstarting new habits.

10 Be open to new experiences.

On the other hand, going to a destination spa isn't the only way to ensure a fitness-focused vacation experience: there are plenty of under-the-radar opportunities for staying healthy while traveling. Take Le Monastère des Augustines, for example. Set in a historic former hospital in Old Quebec that was once run by Augustinian nuns, the spot is now a charming hotel and wellness spa. Guests can take part in a variety of relaxation- and health-promoting programs, including morning meditation and breathing exercises, guided energy walks, and vinyasa yoga. Or if you're heading to New York, spend an afternoon at Spa Castle, a Korean-style, multi-level spa packed with hot and cold pools, saunas and steam rooms, and plenty of quiet areas to lie back and enjoy a moment of quiet. Typical? Not at all. Worth seeking out? Absolutely.

11 Go for a run.

Running is one of the easiest, most effective ways to exercise while traveling—all you really need is a pair of sneakers and you're good to go. (A smart phone and an app like MapMyRun, which suggests routes and tracks mileage, are also helpful, especially when navigating a new place.) In some locales, going for a jog can also net incredible views: the coastal pathway from Bondi to Coogee in Sydney is breathtaking, as are the wooded trail runs in Washington Park just outside Portland, Oregon.

12 Get advice from the experts.

There's no reason to go it alone in terms of fitness when you're traveling. Many hotels are now offering consultations with wellness experts, like the trainers at the Madinat Jumeirah in Dubai, who evaluate guests' cardiovascular strength with a high-altitude simulator. There are even hotels, such as Epic Sana in Portugal or the BodyHoliday in St. Lucia, that will analyze guests' DNA pre-trip and use the results to design a completely individualized wellness plan.

13 Think about getting travel health insurance.

Before you leave the country, check to see if your domestic insurance carrier covers urgent care and emergencies abroad. (Many do.) If not, or if you prefer to have more substantial coverage, it might be a good idea to get a travel health policy. These supplemental insurance plans often provide access to 24-hour nurse hotlines, prescription assistance, and prescreened doctor referrals; browse the options on InsureMyTrip. Or download mPassport, an app that provides access to an extensive, searchable database of English-speaking doctors around the world.

14 Treat yourself.

Even if you're on vacation, travel can be stressful (see: lost luggage, plane delays, trying to arrange logistics when you don't speak the language). To offset travel-related tension, look for experiences that will enhance your mental well-being. Como Hotels, for example, offer sessions with an "intuitive counselor," who will guide guests through a mind-clearing visualization process. And soothing, indulgent spa treatments can be found in almost every city. (Especially New York, where locals really need help relaxing; don't miss the jade stone facial at the Mandarin Oriental.) Better yet, treat yourself to a manicure, hot stone massage, or even an acupuncture session around the road at one of several new airport spas.

15 Borrow a bike.

Biking is a great way to explore a new city, especially if you're in a cycling-friendly locale, but bikes can be a huge pain to travel with. Fortunately, many hotels offer bike-sharing programs for avid (or amateur) cyclists. As part of the James New York's Urban Wellness program, for example, guests can leave their bike at home and borrow one of the hotel's PUBLIC bikes during their stay instead. Mr. C Beverly Hills goes even further, offering biking enthusiasts a cycling package that provides access to premium Colnago bikes, helmets, a map of cycling routes around L.A., cold-pressed juices to load up on before heading out for the day, and massages and other spa treatments to recharge when you get back to the hotel.

16 Take a solo trip.

Leave the anxieties of group trip—planning behind by taking a solo vacation. Exodus Travels offers a range of self-guided vacation options, from walking tours across the volcanic crags of La Palma in the western Canaries to biking along the Danube. (The tour group provides the itinerary and sets up lodging, and travelers walk or cycle independently between stops, going at their own pace.) There are also many hotels that cater to solo travelers, like L'Eremito in Italy's Umbria region, a stunning former monastery where guests can take meditation classes and enjoy silent communal mealtimes.