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- ⊕ 10 Tips to Make Your Holiday Travel Season a Healthy One
- ⊕ Fitness programs, Personal Training Were Leading Trends of 2016

## 10 Tips to Make Your Holiday Travel Season a Healthy One

The Christmas and New Year's holiday season is the busiest travel time of the year, meaning chances are high you will encounter a few challenges on the way to or from your destination. Aside from crossing your fingers about avoiding travel issues, most people rank staying healthy and minimizing weight gain high on the priority list. Here are 10 strategies you can use to stay healthy during your holiday travel.

"Holiday get-togethers often feature a lot of sitting around, eating and drinking. That doesn't mean you have to abandon your healthy living focus," said Katie Urhahn, RD, LD, registered dietitian at Saint Francis Healthcare System. "Go into your trip with an action plan in place and you will find it much easier to mix in some exercise and healthy eating along the way."



Katie Urhahn, RD, LD,  
registered dietitian

**Get Enough Rest** – Take care of final preparations in advance as much as possible so you can enjoy a good night's sleep in your own bed before heading out. The last thing your body needs is an abbreviated night's sleep because you waited

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until the last minute to pack or clean the house. Skimping out on rest weakens your immune system at a time when you likely will encounter more germs than normal.

**Plan Some Travel Snacks** – Stick a few healthy snacks into your carry-on for a flight or lengthy road trip. Nuts, low-sugar energy bars, carrots and other veggies work well. The last thing you want to do if driving is eat a big meal right before you hit the road or spike your blood sugar with unhealthy snacks. Eating smaller meals supplemented with healthy snacks will make you less drowsy and keep you more alert behind the wheel.

**Water is Your Friend** – Travel, especially flying, can have a dehydrating effect on your body. Alcohol, coffee and other caffeinated drinks add to the impact and can lead to health issues such as headaches and constipation. Alcohol has a stronger effect at high altitudes, and research suggests it may enhance symptoms of jet leg. You can't take a full water bottle through airport security, but empties are OK and you can always buy a new one once you clear screening.

**Tolerate Delays** – Travel can be stressful enough without dealing with things out of your control. Understand that travel seldom goes smoothly from beginning to end, whether it's making airline connections or driving through storms. Bring along a book, watch a movie on your mobile device or plan another way to make it through delays in an "oh well" manner.

**Stay Active** – Maintaining the same exercise schedule on the road as you do at home might not always be feasible, but you certainly can sneak in some activity at some point each day. That includes travel days, where walking through airports is a good way to kill some time waiting for your flight. Getting some fresh air every couple of hours on long road trips will help you stay more alert behind the wheel. Once you arrive at your destination, it's a good idea to get your exercise in early before the day's activities get in the way.

**Use Fitness Apps** – Technology can serve as a good accountability partner, as well as providing you with the information you desire from your workouts. MyFitnessPal is a free download that lets you track daily exercise and nutrition. It also estimates how many calories you burn or consume. Nothing like some real numbers to dissuade you from accepting that second piece of pie.

**Plan Some Active Activities** – Skating, sledding and the accompanying calorie burns are great ways to mix in some family fun with exercise. If you're in a warmer area, perhaps a touch football game or playing catch in a nearby park can get your heart pumping.

**Take Control of Your Breakfast** – You may not have much say in the bigger meals of the day, but chances are you can make your own choices about breakfast. Low-sugar energy bars, fruit and unsweetened oatmeal are healthier choices than bacon, pancakes and syrup.

**Portion Size is Key** – Even the big family meals later in the day provide opportunities for self-control. Portion size is the easiest way to limit your calorie intake, and don't forget to mix in about 80 percent vegetables to offset the main course and potatoes. You will feel a little more energetic after eating a normal-sized meal than a Thanksgiving-sized feast.

**Avoid Unhealthy Eating Cycles** – Your body does not respond well to alternating splurge and starvation cycles. Make sure you eat regular-sized meals during the day after consuming a big dinner. Starving your body not only creates an imbalance in your blood sugar levels, your body thinks it needs to conserve calories and adjusts your metabolism to burn fewer calories.

**For more information about staying healthy while traveling, please call the Sports Medicine team at Saint Francis Healthcare System at 573-331-5153.**

## Competition is Shown to be an Effective Exercise Motivational Tool



**Rob Bunger,**  
ATC, CEAS, senior  
athletic trainer

More individuals are enlisting the assistance of professional personal trainers and the structure of fitness programs according to a survey of 2016 fitness trends published by the American College of Sports Medicine's *Health & Fitness Journal*®.

The availability of professional personal trainers has become standard in venues such as health clubs, corporate wellness programs and medical fitness programs. Personal training has been a trending fitness topic for the past decade, and increasing attention has been paid to education and certification as states and organizations look to standardize requirements.

“Older adults are a growing demographic within the health and fitness space,” said Rob Bunger, ATC, CEAS, senior athletic trainer at Saint Francis Healthcare System. “We are seeing more clients among an aging baby boomer generation who are looking for age-appropriate and safe exercise programs.”

Researchers note that individuals reaching retirement age often have more time to invest in fitness programs, and health clubs are capitalizing on their availability to fill slower periods of the day such as midmorning.

Older adults are a growing demographic in the health and fitness space. Personal trainers are seeing more clients among an aging baby boomer generation who are looking for age-appropriate and safe exercise programs. Individuals reaching retirement age often have more time to invest in fitness programs, and health clubs are capitalizing on their availability to fill slower periods such as mid-morning. Geriatric medical specialists also are urging their frail elderly patients to participate in

exercise programs to improve their balance and ability to perform activities of daily living. Functional fitness saw a corresponding trend among fitness topics in large part because it is effective in replicating activities performed around the house. Functional fitness uses strength training to improve balance, power, endurance and coordination.

Yoga is another structured activity on the trends list due to its reputation as a low-impact form of exercise. Practitioners specialize in a variety of yoga forms, which helps keep it fresh and relevant year after year. Yoga builds muscle and core strength, increases flexibility, improves athletic performance and helps protect individuals from injury.



The combination of exercise and weight loss remained a top fitness trend as the most popular diet plans recommend integrating exercise into a daily routine to achieve success. Controlled caloric intake combined with the calorie-burning benefits of exercise have been shown to enhance weight loss and help individuals maintain a healthier weight for the long term.

**For more information about fitness programs offered through Fitness Plus, please call the Sports Medicine team at Saint Francis Healthcare System at 573-331-5153.**