

Tips for Staying Healthy While Traveling

This is the TD Fitness podcast with Coach T episode number 74.

Welcome to the TD Fitness podcast. Giving new ways to live a healthy lifestyle without giving up the things that make life worth living. And now your host, certified health coach and personal trainer Coach T.

Hey guys, welcome back to the TD Fitness podcast. This is episode number 74. I am your host, Coach T and you know, I'm always thinking about how busy people, everyday people like you and I can live healthier. In fact, that's most of what I think about. And typically what I try to cater the topics of this podcast to. I know that oftentimes one of the attributes of busy people is that they, that we travel a lot and I happen to be in the middle of that right now. I'm on travel. You may notice that the weather's actually pretty nice here, but I'll apologize for any kind of ambient noise. I'll try to keep the mic close here as I record so that the sound quality remains okay.

But I realized that there are many things from a healthy living perspective that are somewhat second nature to me when I think about, and prepare, and actually depart for travel, that may not be as obvious to you as maybe you're trying to figure out some of the logistical details, what you're going to do when you travel, who you are you're going to interact with. And all of those other things that kind off rush into our minds as we prepare for and eventually travel to different parts of the country or different parts of the world. So in this episode, I am blending an area of typically one of the more popular types of episodes that I do, which is my personal practices, explaining what I do and how I prepare and a given area of health and fitness. And then I'm going to blend that with one of the more often asked questions, which is how can I maintain a healthy lifestyle with a hectic travel schedule?

So I'm going to give you some insight into how I approach all of this. You know, there are a number of questions that we have to ask ourselves, right? And I'm going to use the example of what we ask ourselves when we try to decide what to pack or what clothes to bring on any kind of trip that we're preparing for, because typically that's what most people like to think about the most. So things like how long will I be gone, right? Do I need to pack for an overnight trip or just a few days or weeks? Where will I stay, is it close to where I'll need to go everyday or not? What's the weather going to be like, do I need a jacket or do I need to bring shorts? What will I not be able to do there? So maybe if you're going to a pretty remote area, maybe you're going to want to take extra things like cold medicine or allergy medicine or something like that.

Also, what will be easier for me to do while I'm there? If I'm staying downtown, for example, there might be plenty of places to eat, so I probably don't need to worry as much about bringing snacks and those types of things. Another question, what are some of the external expectations? Will there be after hours socials? What's the typical attire? Would type of clothes are required for the events or the meetings that I'm attending? So these are all normal things that we ask ourselves when we consider one of the more important aspects, I think of the trip. And that's what clothes to pack, right? Well, if healthy living is important to you, then the same reasoning can be applied. These same types of questions can be applied to your healthy living habits. So as we go through these questions again, we'll look at them this

time from a healthy living standpoint. So if you think about how long am I going to be gone, is it going to be an overnight trip?

Do I need to worry about being able to exercise over just this 24 hour period? Or is it okay to just let exercise go? I mean it's only going to be a day, right? But if it's a few days or weeks, how will I maintain some type of exercise routine? Will I be able to do the same types of exercise with the same amount of frequency, for example, that I'm doing here at home or do I need to adjust that and manage expectations accordingly? Where am I going to stay? Does the hotel have a gym? What's in that gym? Is there a gym or fitness center close by? Is there a park close by where I can get a walk, or a run, or something like that in? What's the weather going to be like? Can I exercise outside or is it going to be rainy and cold the whole time? And what will I not be able to do in my staying in an area that may not be as safe to run early in the morning maybe or later at night? And what will be easier for me to do? Is there a pool at the hotel where I can swim just about anytime I want?

And again, what are those external expectations? How long are my day's going to be for work? Then will there be after hours socials or events that I'm expected to attend? So all of these things should affect how you think about what will change with your healthy habits, even if only for a short period of time. You know, I've had a couple of coaching calls just this past week and one of the things that I brought up in each one of those coaching calls was something, again, it's pretty inherent to the way that I think about this healthy living. But as I try to break it down in its simplest form, in its broadest sense I essentially talked about an equation for healthy living. So in my mind healthy living consists of three parts. It's good nutrition practices, consistent and appropriate exercise and stress management. So if you're going to, if you're looking to live a little bit healthier, then you want better nutrition, you want more movement, for example, in your routine and you want lower stress. And we accomplish this by adding healthy habits to our lives.

So let's talk about those three things, the nutrition, the fitness and the stress through the lens of traveling. And I'll use my current trip, my current situation as an example. So let's start with nutrition. You may know that over the past and I guess 15 months or so, I've been practicing a 14 hour fast on five days of the week and I've been pretty consistent with it. If you go back to episode number 30, which is called my intermittent fasting experiment and tips for following your meal plan, I'll link to that in the show notes. You can learn more about, you know, what I'm doing with that and why I decided to do it. And some of the advantages and maybe disadvantages of intermittent fasting for me. But when it came to this particular trip, like I said, I've been consistent with it now for over a year. I figured that it would be more stressful to try to maintain intermittent fasting here since the days are going to be long. Breakfast is included in the hotel rate and I'm not one to leave money on the table, right?

And much of the purpose of this course is actually socializing with peers at what they, they have a continental breakfast each morning prior to the event. And in many ways I'm expected to be there and to kind of partake, if you will. So I decided, you know what? I'm just not going to do the intermittent fasting over the next three week period, I'll accept that. So for breakfast I will typically have some kind of fruit, maybe a couple of boiled eggs and a little bit of bacon, because I love bacon. And instead of fasting, I'm replacing that, if you will, with a renewed focus on keeping my refined carbohydrate intake pretty low. And when I say refined carbs, I'm thinking like the simple carbs like rice, or like french fries, or chips, or things like that, that I don't typically eat a lot of anyway, but I want to be very diligent, particularly since I'm traveling and because I'm not fasting.

So I mentioned the continental breakfast, I expect that they have, you know, muffins and breakfast bars. In fact, I know that they do, but over the past week that I've been here, I have not consumed any of those because I don't feel like I need them. So if I get some protein

and some fruit in with my breakfast, then I typically am not hungry throughout the morning. And I have been drinking coffee, no sugar with just a little bit of cream, but for me that helps to curb my appetite. Coffee and tea do that for me and that's something that I practice pretty much daily when I'm doing intermittent fasting. I'll also pick up a piece of fruit, like a banana or an apple or something from the hotel breakfast here and keep that for a mid morning snack in case I do get hungry. And I've been able to actually have a salad for lunch every day. So there's a place within walking distance of where we're meeting that I can actually go and get a pretty decent salad.

And I planned ahead and brought a bag of almonds, so I'll take a handful of those every day and use those as kind of an afternoon snack, again, if I need to. Dinner, typically I will have that out at a local restaurant, but, you know, so that I can enjoy actually being here. But again, I don't go crazy with dinner. I try to keep that relatively healthy if I can and I also try to avoid something that is, that sometimes I have a problem with. And that is those late nights sweet tooth, the late night cravings, if you will. So what I typically do is I keep just a little bit of dark chocolate in the room to kind of curb that or, you know, to satisfy that temptation, if you will. So again, nothing too crazy, not a lot of candy bars or things like that, but just some quality dark chocolate.

So nutritionally speaking, I would say that my habits are pretty sound despite the fact that I'm not fasting at all while I'm gone. And that's again, that's a choice that I made. So I planned for that nutritional environment or this nutritional environment, if you will. I prioritized what was and was not important during this trip, because it's okay to stop fasting for three weeks, for example, but I can still focus on other healthy aspects of my diet. So I planned, prioritized, and then part three I adjusted my normal routine. You'll find that, that plan, prioritize and adjust is going to be a theme here as we talk about some of the things you do while you're traveling in order to remain healthy. So now let's move on to the fitness component of that healthy living equation. Remember we said that healthy living, healthier living consists of better nutrition, consistent and appropriate exercise and stress management.

So the fitness aspect is important. And for me right now and right now particularly, I have to pay particular attention to my fitness during this month because I have a 70.3 mile half marathon or half iron man race in three weeks at the time of this recording. So the race is actually one week after I return home, which means I need to be pretty precise and consistent with what I do and what I don't do from an exercise perspective, exercise standpoint. So staying with my example, you know, that race consists of a swim, a bike and a run. And putting things into perspective, the swim portion makes up about, I don't know, about an eighth of the total race give or take, right? And I've been consistent with my swim training over the past six months, I feel comfortable in the water. I planned ahead, doubled up on my required swim workouts during the weeks leading up to this trip. So I made the call that I'm just going to forego the swim training while I'm traveling for these three weeks. The logistical hassle of trying to find a pool to do laps in would just be a little bit too much, but I do need to stay consistent in other parts of my training.

For example, on the bike. So before traveling I reached out to a local bicycle shop, I visited them when I got into town and worked out a rental deal for two weekends, because I didn't want to ship my bike down here again. When you think about the logistics of that just for a three week period, that's not something that I wanted to do. But I worked out a deal with the bike shop where I could rent a bicycle to ride while I'm here. So I planned ahead thinking about the run training, you know, I scoped some of the running routes using Google maps before I came, before I departed to come on this trip. Also when I got here, I drove around to see what was available and I was able to get eyes on and plan for a route with loops for

example, versus an out and back since I would need to stop periodically during my longer runs for some kind of water and nutrition.

So as far as timing though, you know, I knew that due to my work schedule here I'd only have time to bike and to run on the weekend. So I had to plan what I would do and when I'd do it too, right? So I also have to keep an eye on the weather, so all of these things go into the planning stages and really thinking, putting some forethought into how you're going to approach your fitness. Now, I might've had to put a little bit more thought into it because like I said, over the next couple of weeks, my training has to be pretty precise. I have certain checkpoints, if you will, that I have to make. So I put a lot of thought into that, but that's an example of the types of things that you can consider for your own workouts. Things I could do during the week though. When I think about some of those other components of my preparation plan for this race, stretching, core work and strength are all part of the plan that I put together for this triathlon. And I knew that I could use the hotel gym, but I also created, the plan that I created has pretty short body weight routines.

So it's actually very conducive to having minimal time and minimal equipment, and you'll find that, that's pretty consistent through most of the things that I create, because I tend to cater to like busy lifestyles. Right? So I just used the plan that I created in that regard, but I also did bring some additional equipment, some equipment that travels very well and provides even more options. The TRX is one of those, the stick, which is a way of kind of massaging your muscles. I brought a racket ball for some work, you know, again, to massage muscles and a calf stretcher, because those are typically some of the tighter areas on, you know, for me. But another example though, my wife is actually going to join me for part of this trip, I'm excited about that. In fact, she'll be here in a couple of hours, but she's been very consistent with her exercise at home as well and she wants to maintain that consistency. So she asked that I send her some pictures of the hotel gym so that she could think about what was available here at the hotel.

So what I did was just shot a quick video with my phone and I sent it to her. And you can usually check out the pictures on the hotel website before you travel as well. So again, when it goes back, you think about this planning aspect, these are all things that you need to consider. But we also discussed some ways for each of us to maintain our healthy habits and where we're going to accept certain habits as being a lower priority. So one of the things she said was that she knows that she won't have as much access to or as much time to exercise like she has been at home. And that's true, that's a fair statement. But what she said is, "Hey, I'm just going to have to focus more on nutrition." So again, we go back to our theme of planning, planning what you can do, prioritizing, because you can't do everything and then adjusting those actions that you're going to take.

So the third part of our equation for healthy living is managing stress. And I'm going to break this down because as I see it, stress management is really made up of two buckets. It's the things that cause us stress and what we do to de-stress. So those are the two buckets, things that cause us stress and really how we deal with that stress. When you think about the things that cause stress, there are couple of parts to that too. There are those things that are a normal part of life or those things that are self imposed or self induced. So the normal parts of life things I think about are having kids, especially small children, sick parents, maybe a demanding job, maybe even relationship issues. These are normal parts of life that sometimes you just can't. Right? But then they're also self-imposed stresses, things like extra curricular activities, things that we volunteer to do extra duties at church, school, even races like this triathlon that I'm doing. That's an additional stress, but I chose to do that.

And again, I said that a demanding job and relationship issues are possibly normal parts of life, but sometimes those are self imposed as well, because you may actually have the option

of cutting back on what you do for your job and having the option of changing your relationship status if it's causing you stress. So that's why I put that in kind of both categories, but understanding that sometimes we choose to stay in situations that cause stress when we may actually have a choice not to. Okay? Just on the side there. But we have to be honest with ourselves. But these are, those are some of the things that can cause stress, things that we cannot control and some things that we can control. So that's bucket number one, right? But what do we do to de-stress? If you think back to episode number 52 that was five steps to deal with stress and then episode number 59 as well, which was the new year episode and that was practical advice to reduce stress and take action in the new year.

I'll link to both of those in the show notes. I talked about some of those de-stressing techniques in each of those episodes. But briefly think exercise, sleep, meditation or some kind of self reflection, reading, relaxation, any of your relaxation methods, any number of things can serve to de-stress and you can use as a de-stressor or to manage your stress. So bringing it back to my current example, we have small children, but the kids aren't traveling on with us on this trip. Okay? So I know that with the kids at home I can be diligent with going to bed in time to get seven and a half hours of sleep for example. When I'm at home, I get home from work and I really want to, my wife and I both, we want to spend time with the children before they go to bed because they're only up for a couple of hours after I get home from work. So there's the time we spend with the children, there's the bedtime routine that we want to be a part of that, you know, there's the bathing, we want to read to them. All of those things take time.

And then once we finish that, then we have time for ourselves. Right? But that means that if you take that time for yourself, then oftentimes it can be pretty late at night before you go to bed. And that's often what happens when we're at home. But here with no kids, I can be more diligent about going to bed around nine o'clock and getting, you know, a good seven and a half hours of sleep. I mentioned too that my wife is joining me for a week here at the conference. She has a role in this training too and she's actually taken part in a lot of the training. But we happened to be in an area where we're meeting up with the, where we know a number of folks here and we don't always get to see these, you know, our friends. So we know that meeting up with friends after work is going to be a part of, you know, our trip here. The dinners will likely not allow us to make it back to the hotel and get back in time to get as much sleep as we would like, because of the early mornings that we have to, you know, we have to get up pretty early to make it into the training.

So we understand that something's got to give there. But again, we decide and prioritize that the opportunity to spend time with good friends who we won't get to see for a while is maybe more important than getting seven or eight hours of sleep every single night. So we talked about exercise as a stress relief and how we'll incorporate that into our schedules. When it comes to meditation, personally I don't meditate, but that is something that I am looking at exploring in the near future. But what I do, try to do is get at least a little bit of time to reflect on most mornings and I've been able to, I'm usually pretty consistent with that and I've been able to do that here as well. One of the things that I will do in the morning in that regard is listen to a Christian radio. I use an App called Air1 Worship Now, I've used it for years and I'll link to that, to Air1 in the show notes as well. But that's a time for me when I wake up, you know, it's calming. I don't turn the TV on, I just turn that on and listen to it as I go about my morning routine.

So remember I talked about voluntary stressors as well? Well, as it happened, you know, I looked at this trip a couple of weeks out and I looked at this travel, this trip as an opportunity to finally get to finish a pretty big project that I had started. It's actually a new product that I wanted to roll out to you all by mid May. It's essentially an in-depth checklist that you can follow, a program, if you will, for healthy living. A healthy living blueprint of sorts for busy

individuals. So I established a timeline, you know, wrote down my week by week tasks. I laid out all the milestones to get this thing across the goal line and to get it ready for prime time. And it was going to start with some work that needed to be done this past week, I've been on travel for a week already. Again, I had the milestones set up from now until the release of the new program.

But what I didn't expect once I got here was that the days we're going to be pretty long. I didn't know how long, that they were going to be this long and I didn't know that I was going to have additional tasks and duties after the work day, I hadn't anticipated that. So essentially since I didn't make my initial milestone that I had set, which was to get a pretty significant amount of work done on this new project over the past week, I knew that it was just going to snowball from there. And I don't want to rush anything that I create and present to you all as a solution for better health. So I had to make the hard call to slide the release of that new program to a later date to be determined to sometime in the future. Instead, I'll focus on other aspects of the business, but I was pretty disappointed about that. But that's an example of making in my mind, a really tough call. Something that I wanted to do and that was a priority coming into this, but because of events that I could not control actually had to change my outlook on that.

So planning, prioritizing, and adjusting. Okay? When you anticipate travel, plan first, think ahead. Put some thought toward those areas of nutrition, fitness and stress management so that you can continue your healthy habits while you're gone. Prioritize, understand that you can't do everything, especially in a different environment, one that is different than the one that you're used to, your day to day life back home. And decide on what's what's most important, but really be honest with yourself about what isn't as important, maybe for this brief period of time that you're away. And then adjust and be flexible, I know it may sound dramatic here, but think about how you're going to live your life during the time while you're away. Because living life day to day is what determines the type of life that you'll have from week to week, month to month, and year to year. You know, busyness and travel are just a part of life for most of us, but it doesn't have to prevent us from remaining healthy. That's what I want you to take away from this plan, prioritize, adjust, remain flexible. All right?

That's all I have for now. I'll link to all of those references that I made here in the show notes. The show notes for this episode can be found at tdfitness.net/074. I wish you all safe travels and healthy living and I want you to have a blessed week, Coach T, signing out.