

Enjoy your summer vacation... **AND YOUR FITNESS LEVEL!**

You've planned all year
for your summer vacation.
It's finally here!

By Alexis Andrianopoulos



You've also been working hard at the gym, and you like the results so far. With a little advance planning and some discipline on your part, your vacation does not have to mean a setback to your fitness level. Here are some tried and true methods for maintaining your current weight and fitness level while you travel.

Before you go

- Check with your home gym to see if they belong to the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association, a trade association serving the health and fitness club industry. According to Suzanne Olson, Group Exercise Director at Club La Maison in Wayne and co-producer of the DCAC Fitness Conferences, "If your club belongs to IHRSA, you could be eligible for discounts at other participating clubs." If so, here's your chance to try a new class or club at a discounted rate.
- Plan ahead. Take light, portable exercise tools such as a jump rope, exercise band or tubing. If you're traveling by car and don't have to carry a heavy suitcase through airport security, you can even throw some light (3-5 lb.) dumbbells in your suitcase.
- Eat a healthy meal before you set off, and bring healthy, low-calorie snacks with you for the voyage. "Fresh fruit, chopped veggies, popcorn, bottled water and juice, and peanut butter sandwiches make for easy travel fare," suggested Margaret Moses, RD, Director of Nutrition Services at the ACAC Fitness & Wellness Center in West Chester.

On the road

- Try to eat every 4-5 hours so you're not famished at mealtime.
- Take every opportunity for extra movement, whether it's in the airport or at a highway rest stop. Use stairs, carry your

own luggage or baggage, and jog around the parking lot with Fido if you're bringing him along on a long car trip.

At last, you've arrived!

- Staying at a hotel? Refuse the mini-bar key. "Not only are the prices outrageous, but the choices are not the healthiest," says dietitian Margaret Moses. Instead of raiding the mini-bar, find a nearby health food store or grocery and stock up on healthy snacks.
- Kristin McNerney-Posner, Group Fitness Coordinator for two of Philadelphia Sports Clubs, agrees, "Be conscious of what you're eating. Make smart choices."
- Regardless of where you are, take advantage of the opportunity to do something different and, "Get out of your daily grind," says McNerney-Posner. "Rent bikes and ride with your family, walk on the beach, play tennis, even bring your inline skates with you!" Get outside for the ultimate cross-training workout.
- Bring a good pair of running or walking shoes. "No matter how remote your vacation destination, you can run or walk anywhere," urges Club La Maison's Suzanne Olson. "Aim for 20-30 minutes of steady cardiovascular exercise three or four times a week, and supplement that cardio exercise with pushups, dips, and crunches."
- If you've packed a band or tube, do resistance work with it. Do a search on the Internet for "resistance band exercises," and you'll find several workouts from

which to choose. Print them and take them with you on vacation.

- Taking your laptop with you? Borrow some fitness DVDs from your local library and watch them on your laptop. "Since you may not know how much space you have available, a mat-based workout video like Pilates or yoga is perfect," says Olson. "Do your run or walk in the morning, and later on you can add a short mat workout."
- Try an interval workout. With the jump rope you packed, it's easy to do. Jump rope for 2-3 minutes, then do a set of squats. Jump rope again for a few minutes, then do some pushups. Jump rope again and do dips. You get the idea.

It's worth the time it takes to plan ahead for a healthy trip, "But be realistic," offers Margaret Moses. "You probably won't lose weight on vacation, but maintenance [of your fitness level] is possible." McNerney-Posner from Philadelphia Sports Clubs agrees. "Don't stress over it. Enjoy your vacation and treat yourself to some foods you might not always get to enjoy, but don't overdo it." If you splurge on those boardwalk fries at lunchtime, eat a sensible dinner. And most of all, have a safe trip!



Alexis Andrianopoulos packs her jump rope when she goes on vacation and always scouts out a local gym. She teaches fitness classes at clubs in the Philadelphia area and northern Delaware.