

Be a Savvy Business Traveler

Morris Massey, a business presenter, travels with his own pillow to help him feel at home. Lynn Lannon, a training consultant, fights jet lag by setting her watch at takeoff to the time zone of her destination; her body goes along with the ruse.

The savvy traveler knows how to be comfortable on a business trip and how to save time, money, and aggravation by making the right choices and asking the right questions. Here's what some frequent flyers have learned en route.

If time is important, frequent flyers say, choose airlines that have good records for on-time arrival. If your company has cut back on first-class business travel, know which airlines are most likely to upgrade passengers from coach to first class when there's space.

Like ticket prices, such traveling "perks" change frequently. A carrier that once featured a lot of leg room in business class may have crammed extra seats into its new planes. Check with a good travel agent before you fly, to sort it out and to learn about special services for business travelers, such as in-flight telephones.

To avoid that cattle-car feeling, fly coach during the evening when planes are less crowded. Ask for an aisle seat so you can get in and out easily.

When booking your flight, remember that changing planes is usually cheaper than flying straight through to a destination. But it takes longer, too.

On a long flight, sleeping may help you avoid jet lag, that out-of-sync feeling that occurs when you cross time zones. According to Rosenbluth Travel, it takes about a day for the body to adjust for each time zone a traveler crosses.

You may not be able to avoid jet lag, but you can reset your biological clock to diminish its effects. It takes a few days of advance preparation. If you are traveling east, try eating meals and going to sleep an hour earlier each night for three or four days before your trip. If you are going west, stay awake longer and eat later than you usually do.

Pamper yourself. Airlines supply pillows and blankets, but many travelers bring along other sleep aids, such as inflatable head supports and tapes of their favorite soothing music. A flight attendant recommends using your carry-on luggage as a foot rest to help ease back fatigue.

The humidity in an airplane is about a fifteenth of what our bodies are used to. Alcohol, coffee, and tea hasten dehydration; drink water and fruit juices instead. If you wear contact lenses, take them out during flights, or use eye drops.

Most frequent travelers recommend eating lightly on airplanes. If you're sitting in coach, order a special meal when you book your flight. The food tends to be better because it's made in smaller quantities, and you can be sure to get what you

want. Most airlines can accommodate passengers who require special diets such as low-sodium, vegetarian, or kosher, but be sure to place your order in advance.

Consider purchasing access to airline club lounges. Clubs charge initiation fees and annual dues, but they also offer an escape from crowded boarding areas. And they are excellent places to conduct business when flights are delayed. Some even offer private office space. Try asking your company to cover the annual dues as a business expense.

Let technology help you. A good travel agent can do more for you than just book your ticket. Agents can search out low fares, using such commercial computer networks as Apollo, Sabre, and Worldspan. Some agencies have systems that update and search rates continually and can sell you a new ticket if a cheaper seat becomes available.

You can also be your own travel agent. Anyone with a PC and a modem can get access to Sabre, the American Airlines system. You can use it to check fares, make reservations on more than 300 airlines, reserve seats, book hotel rooms, hire rental cars, and send messages to travel agencies.

— Donna Ferrier
Training & Development staff

Take the Wrinkles Out of Your Travel Wardrobe

Do you spend more time packing for a business trip than you spend traveling? Try using a wardrobe consultant to help you select the right clothes in the right colors. Most big department-store chains have such consultants, and their services are free.

Donna Robinson is the manager of the Personal Touch department at Nordstrom in Tysons Corner, Virginia, a complimentary service that helps people plan their wardrobes. She offers business travelers these tips.

Travel with clothes made of wool, gabardine, or silk. They wrinkle less than rayon or cotton, and they breathe regardless of the climate. In warm climates, wear light colors and loose, less tailored clothes. In cool climates, pack darker colors. Women should build

their travel wardrobes around two basic colors and add accent colors.

A smart investment for a woman traveler is an all-weather gabardine coat, says Robinson. It's formal enough to wear for business purposes, and it can also double as a raincoat.

Pack loosely, with few folds; layer the tissue paper and plastic from your dry cleaning between the clothes to create air pockets, which prevent wrinkling. Pack heavier items, such as shoes, in the bottom of the suitcase. Save space by packing small items in your shoes.

How much is enough? How much you pack depends on how long you're going to be gone and how many changes of clothes you'll be making each day.

Before you pack, plan each day's outfits. For example, if you have a day of meetings, you'll probably wear business attire all day. But if you're having a meeting, a golf game, and a cocktail party in one day, you'll start out in a business suit, change to something casual, and then change into something formal.

Bring only what you need. Generally speaking, Robinson suggests that a woman bring the following for a week's worth of business travel: three jackets; four skirts; four blouses or knit tops; a pair of slacks; a pair each of low-heeled, high-heeled, and casual shoes; a cocktail dress; three scarves; two belts; and some earrings and pins.

Select accessories to match your clothes; mix and match to create different looks. "Anyone can wear a black dress," says Robinson, "but a black dress with a pin and a gold belt is a totally different look than the same dress with a multicolored scarf." Cardigan sweaters can substitute for jackets and are also great for casual wear.

Men should plan on no more than three suits for a week of travel, as well as six or seven shirts, seven ties, socks, one or two pairs of shoes, and a casual outfit. Men can mix and match shirts and ties with the suits to create a different look each day.

A big incentive for traveling light is the advantage of being able to get everything into your carry-on bags. If you don't check suitcases, you don't have to spend time at airport lug-

gage carousels. And you don't have to worry about losing your luggage.

If you do check luggage, Robinson recommends carrying an emergency kit in your carry-on bag, including clothes and toiletries you couldn't do without for one day.

For items such as shampoo, conditioner, and contact-lens solution, carry only the amounts you will

need during the trip. Small, reusable, plastic containers are good for this.

One very frequent flyer, a motivational speaker, shares a useful tip. He hired a wardrobe consultant to help him organize his clothing around his travel needs.

The consultant interviewed him for six hours before tossing unsuitable suits out of his wardrobe and

rearranging his closet into four categories—casual, business, dressy business, and dressy social. The consultant even arranged his socks and underwear.

The expert then sent him on "a color-coordinated, two-of-everything, and everything-of-good-quality" wardrobe shopping spree. Now, he just chooses a "color of the week"; then he can pack in 10 minutes for seven days of travel.

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