



EXECUTIVE VITALITY™: MAINTAINING YOUR EFFECTIVENESS AND VITALITY ON THE ROAD

Many of you reading this can relate to the idea that traveling for work can be both exciting and exhausting. In our work as executive coaches, we hear more often than not that travel challenges an executive's effectiveness unless certain routines and commitments are built in upfront. All the good habits you normally call on to support your vitality – eating and sleeping properly, exercise, reflection, time with family, and fun – are difficult to achieve on the road. Planning can help even the fiercest road warriors stay vital while traveling.

As with many aspects of business and life, your commitment to a plan will help you succeed. An essential part of planning for organizational success (which you already do) is identifying objectives and goals, anticipating barriers, and determining how to overcome them. Pre-travel planning leads to an increased chance that you show up to your meetings well-conditioned for success.

The first step is to identify one to four goals for your trip. For example, Joe recently took a five-day trip to the Middle East. His goals while away were to: 1) sleep at least seven hours per night; 2) work out three out of the five days; 3) limit his Weight Watchers® Points to 30 per day, and 4) stay connected to home.

If you find yourself in this situation, here are ideas to help you meet your goals:

- To maximize your chances for adequate sleep, plan to: 1) for the week before departure, go to bed at a time closer to the time zone you are traveling to; 2) ask your doctor for a prescription that will aid in your sleep; 3) avoid drinking, heavy meals, TV, computers, and loud noise at least 30 minutes before you go to bed; 4) try reading a boring hotel magazine; 5) get a massage or go into the whirlpool the evening of arrival if you have the time or budget. Keep a pad of blank paper at your bedside. If you wake up during the night – write down your thoughts and review in the morning.
- Commit to exercising while you are away. There is no reason (except lack of commitment) that you can't work out. Even if there isn't a nearby gym, you can go for a walk, or do sit-ups and push-ups in your room; some executives even travel with resistance bands, which are lightweight and portable. Just do it! And PLAN for what you are going to do: on Monday – cardio; on Tuesday weights or bands...
- Finding healthy eating choices while traveling can be difficult, but not impossible. Follow your at-home eating plan, look up the calories – or points – in the food you are going to eat before you eat it, and get right back on track if you slip up. You all know what to do – really!
- Staying in touch with those back home is important to executives when they travel. That might mean talking with them ahead of time to figure out when you will be able to have video calls together, or if text is the best you can do. Let's be grateful for the technology that was not available to executives who traveled in the past.

The key to all of this is rigorous honesty with yourself. Remember, when you are on the road, maintaining your effectiveness and vitality is up to you.

How can you take care of yourself better on your next trip? What advance planning will make it easier?