



## HEALTH RESOURCES EAP

### Business Travel e-book

- ❖ Coping with the stress of business travel
- ❖ Hassle-free business travel
- ❖ Gaining workplace support
- ❖ Minimizing the impact of business travel on your family

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## Coping with the stress of business travel - Part I

### Helpful Resources

### Related websites

- ❖ [www.hertravel.com](http://www.hertravel.com)
- ❖ [www.charliehudson.net](http://www.charliehudson.net)
- ❖ [www.travmed.com](http://www.travmed.com)

### Books

- ❖ [Business Travel Blues: Something stressful in the Air](#) by Lain Chroust Ehmann
- ❖ [Savvy Business Travel: Management Tips from the Pros](#) by Darryl Jenkins
- ❖ [Traveling Alone: A Practical Guide for Business Women](#) by Susanna North
- ❖ [The Parent's Guide to Business Travel](#) by Charlie Hudson
- ❖ [The Wall Street Journal Guides to Business Travel USA & Canada](#) by Edie Jarolim (Ed.)

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*You no longer need to feel resigned to dreading business travel; there is much you can do to turn it into a stress-free - - or even an enjoyable - - experience. Here are some ideas:*

- ❖ Take a mental vacation while enroute. Read, enjoy in-flight entertainment, and converse with neighbors – put work on hold during travel.
- ❖ Escape in a book. Bring pleasure-reading and actually read it! Keep your book with you while on your trip, and dip into it while waiting in lines, eating alone, or sitting in a park. Get in the habit of reading for a short time before bed, to take your mind away from work and other stress-inducing thoughts.
- ❖ Find another outlet. Is shopping your sport? It is for many travelers, including those on business trips. Shopping can be another diversion from the daily grind, and, after all, walking around a mall is another form of exercise.
- ❖ Create your own spa. Men and women both can turn a business trip into a good excuse to pamper themselves. Pack scented candles for a leisurely hotel bath, bring favorite music and a portable CD player, and allow yourself to enjoy uninterrupted relaxation time.
- ❖ Tune everything out. Do late night revelers keep you awake? Bring along a sound machine. Battery-operated or plug-in models can be found in gift and gadget stores, and are easy to pack.
- ❖ Ask for it – they just might have it. Many personal items, from a toothbrush to a sewing kit, are available at most hotels.



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## Coping with the stress of business travel - Part II

- ❖ Plan for physical fitness during your trip. Choose an appropriate method of exercising and pack equipment accordingly, stay in hotels that cater to travelers interested in fitness, and use a guidebook to plan walking tours of local tourist attractions, museums, scenic areas, etc.
- ❖ Keep in close touch with your office and family. Carry some photos of your spouse and kids, or others dear to you. Write postcards, letters, and email. Keep a diary. Take pictures. Buy gifts or souvenirs to bring home.
- ❖ Carry playing cards, a board game, or a “walkman” with your favorite cassettes (or, for foreign travel, carry foreign language tapes for the walkman, or a shortwave radio to listen to music and news on the Voice of America or the BBC).
- ❖ If you are a recovering alcoholic, find out if there is a local AA chapter or other self-help group in the area. For a directory of AA chapters overseas, contact: AA World Services, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY, 10163, or call 212-686-1100.
- ❖ Research your destination. Find out as much as possible about the location you’re in, its history, and its culture. Make it a project to learn something specific about some aspect of the culture. If you’re in a foreign country, and can speak some of the language, do this as much as possible.
- ❖ Turn your trip into a psychic adventure. Stripped of your ordinary surroundings, your friends and family, and your usual routine, you may be forced into a more direct experience with your new surroundings and yourself. This can be painful, but don’t retreat! View your new surroundings not only in terms of work but as an opportunity to learn and grow.
- ❖ “Draw a line around your job,” even on the road. Take at least two hours of downtime away from work, every day you’re away. Take a shower, change your clothes, or get some exercise – something that helps you transition from your professional role to your personal role. Schedule after-hours meetings around activities instead of more food and drink. Keep evenings free from work-related activities, and do something enjoyable instead.





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### Hassle-free business travel

*Tired of logistical snags while traveling? Here are some tips on ways to predict and prevent many of the most common snafus.*

1. Choose your travel modality wisely. While air travel is clearly the only way to go for long journeys, shorter trips of a couple hundred miles may be faster by train, bus, or auto.
2. Consider flying in and out of smaller cities rather than the usual big-city airports. As a rule, these airports have fewer flights, less overbooking and fewer delays than their larger counterparts.
3. Obtain an international driver's license if traveling outside your own country. An international driver's license will be more readily recognized than your locally issued driver's license.
4. Get your maps before you leave home. Travel is less stressful if you know how to get around, and if you already have that information before your trip begins.
5. Carry electronic work-related documents rather than hard copy. Rather than carry heavy stacks of brochures or sales letters, take electronic documents on diskettes and have them printed at a local printing service.
6. Find hotels that cater to business travelers. These will have Internet capabilities and offer access to business machines such as faxes and photocopiers.
7. Remember adaptors and converters. If you're traveling to a foreign country, remember that you might need special voltage adaptors for electricity. You might also need plug adaptors to accommodate both electrical plugs and telephone jacks.
8. Use calling cards when you're staying at a hotel. The phone bill can be a major expense; the cost of calling your family, checking your voice mail and checking your email is best handled by using a telephone calling card or a corporate credit card.
9. Check your cellular service. Cellular phone companies regularly offer new rates. Check to be sure you're getting the best deal – some now include long-distance charges in the monthly fee. If your business travel will take you to small, out-of-the-way towns, your digital phone might not work. You will need an analog or dual digital/analog phone for such trips.
10. Protect yourself against theft. Before leaving home, make copies of your travel documents (passport, airline tickets, travel insurance, credit cards, and itinerary). Take copies with you and leave a copy with a contact at home. Avoid carrying important documents in your purse or hip pocket. And, take special precautions for your electronics. See what your local travel store has to offer in terms of protective luggage.



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## Gaining Workplace Support

*Balancing work and family is a constant challenge for any employee in this complex, modern world. For frequent business travelers, this challenge is aggravated by the many logistical complications that arise -- both from the traveler's unruly schedule and from the often increased amount of work prior to and following the travel mission. Good communication between you and your supervisor about ways your workplace can support you in trying to achieve a healthy work/family balance can greatly reduce your stress level. Remember: what affects the traveler affects the household; what affects the household affects the workplace. Here are some issues to consider discussing with your supervisor:*

1. When applying for a new position, ask for candid information about how much travel the position requires. Be realistic as to whether a job requiring frequent travel is right for you.
2. Ask for flexibility in your travel schedule to allow more time at home. Ideally, business travelers would like to be able to return home before weekends, and leave home after weekends. When possible, ask to be consulted about the timing of your missions, and ask your supervisor to set realistic limits to the amount of time spent away from home per year. Many organizations have official policies allowing employees to refuse travel assignments; pay attention to whether immediate supervisors tend to look down upon employees' decisions to refuse assignments.
3. See whether travel schedules and work assignments can be overviewed by senior staff members who have "been there, done that." You might consider requesting days off from work before a mission and again upon return in order to take care of family chores and office matters.
4. Discuss the possibility of reducing your workload immediately before and after trips. Office workload tends to increase just before a mission (routine work plus preparing for the mission) and immediately upon return. Optimum office scheduling may call for time to be set aside several days before the trip for mission preparation, and for a day or two of "debriefing" and catch-up when you get back.
5. Convey your hope that trip cancellations and date changes, though often unavoidable, be kept to a minimum. Repeated changes in travel schedules can be very disruptive to the personal lives of frequent business travelers.
6. Ask to be linked with in-house or external counselors to help with travel planning. Experts can help travelers cope with many of the basic travel issues, such as health and safety concerns. Many corporations already have in-house medical departments, sometimes even travel clinics, and some organizations have extensive websites to help business travelers better plan trips.
7. See whether your workplace will consider, when you're traveling, paying the cost of your daily emails and phone calls to home. Keep in mind that daily contact greatly helps travelers feel connected to loved ones – which reduces stress – and also improves the well-being of the children and spouse at home.





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## Minimizing the impact of business travel on your family

*Is it inevitable that you, your kids, and your spouse or partner will suffer emotionally from your trips away? No. Take the reins! Here's what you can do:*

### **For your kids:**

- ❖ Schedule special family events prior to departure – a day in the park, a day trip, a visit to a favorite restaurant.
- ❖ Let children accompany the departing parent to the airport. Include them in discussions of itinerary and in map-reading, and provide them with books and videos about the countries the parent is visiting.
- ❖ Stay in close touch with kids while away. Use email, telephone, snail-mail – and try not to worry about the cost. It's worth it.
- ❖ Consider taking children on work trips. Surprisingly, it is a commonplace choice around the world and is often encouraged or at least tolerated by the employer; some of them are even willing to foot the bill. Parents who take children along say it is educational and entertaining and helps build family togetherness.

### **For your spouse or partner:**

- ❖ The spouse at home often feels abandoned, worries about the traveler's safety, and is sometimes concerned about infidelity. Spouses without children tend to experience stress either before or after the mission; spouses with children primarily experience stress during the mission. Be sensitive to these stresses, stay in close contact with your spouse, and offer appropriate reassurances – even before being asked.
- ❖ Close to 100% of spouses describe their returning mate as irritable and withdrawn when they return home, possibly the effects of fatigue and stress. The business traveler should let the at-home spouse know they'd prefer to re-enter their home life slowly and quietly. Ask for coming-home celebrations to be postponed for a few days.

