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5 Things Women Should Know Before Their Next Travel Trip

As is true with most things, your business trip will be easier the more you plan ahead.



By [Joelle K. Jay@JoelleKJay](mailto:JoelleKJay)



IMAGE: Getty Images

Women manage a complex life. For many women, business travel means not only making plans for ourselves, but for our children and families.

If you follow my column you know I often write about ways to maximize your time, and this is still true when it comes to business travel. As is true with most things, your business trip will be easier the more you plan ahead.

Many of the following are things we always say we'll do, but never do, before we travel in order to maximize our time--and sanity--during business travel:

Give up packing. I recommend that people have a small suitcase completely packed at all times. Set up a business travel-designated suitcase with duplicated essentials: your makeup and toiletries, an extra set of glasses or contacts (if not cost-prohibitive), a travel-specific set of PJs and a full workout outfit with shoes. This will cut out at least 30 minutes of packing. Have standard travel outfits that are always at the ready--one black dress, a black blazer, a white blouse, and pair of black slacks. You can always mix up your travel wardrobe by throwing in different scarves at the last minute.

Think through all modes of your transportation. This includes buses, trains, cars, and hotel reservations. Minimize your stress factor by having this all done before you leave, especially when you've never been to your travel destination before. For example, if you have a meeting in Las Vegas it's good to know that when you get off the plane you may need to wait 45 minutes to get a cab, and that should be factored in on your time. On the other hand, if you're trying to hail a cab at a busy time, perhaps in New York City, for example, you might not get one at all. Get a sense of your options in advance so you won't be unpleasantly surprised.

Give everything a specific place. This can cut both time and stress. If you have a travel-specific portfolio or folder that you carry with you with all of your travel documents in specific locations you never have to suffer from that "Did I forget..." moment. If you know you keep your passport in the front flap of your portfolio, and you know that you keep your tickets in the back flap of your portfolio, you never have to get frazzled while you're digging through your bags in the security line.

Get WiFi passwords in advance. Most people don't know that you can get the WiFi passwords of places like hotels and airports ahead of time if you search online--FourSquare is a great place to start. Googling and getting this information beforehand can ensure that you're not late on those urgent emails and calls that can come through when you're on the go. Plus, connecting can help save your cellphone battery from extra distress.

Plan your downtime. There's a lot of downtime during travel, and it doesn't have to be a waste (unless you want it to be)! If you want to be more productive than checking your Twitter feed for the third time, think outside the box. What could you be listening to in the security line? Perhaps that new audiobook you've been meaning to start, or that podcast discussing the latest market trends.

Unexpected downtime becomes less frustrating when you have a plan, even offline--prepare printed documents ahead of time that contain the notes for a proposal you need to create or phone numbers you need for the calls on your to-do list.

Maximizing your time is still possible while sitting in an airport--you can meet your goals by preparing ahead of time, allowing you to arrive at your destination awake and ready to go. The next time you go on a trip, do your best to prepare, but also pay attention to where and when you get frustrated along the way. Pay attention to the points at which you reach boredom or stress, perhaps during delays, and next time use the strategies above to help plan your downtime and solve your frustration.

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Joelle K. Jay, Ph. D., is an executive coach specializing in leadership development. She strategizes with business leaders to enhance their performance and maximize business results. Her clients include presidents, vice presidents, and C-level executives in Fortune 500 companies such as Microsoft, Google, and Adobe. She is the author of *The Inner Edge: The 10 Practices of Personal Leadership*. For a free summary, go to www.TheInnerEdge.com or email Info@TheInnerEdge.com.