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Why she's excited for the future

BOLD BEAUTY (That's Actually Easy)

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GETAWAY

a happier, healthier VACATION

You picked a great destination. Now the trick is to relax and enjoy it, which means eliminating stress, navigating hassles, and maximizing the bliss. Here, travel pros share their best strategies. *By Mirel Zaman*

Stress-proof your mind

"Expect disruptions when you're traveling," says Caroline Klein, the healthy-travel expert and EVP of Preferred Hotels and Resorts. It might sound like a downer, but the mind-set is actually empowering. "So many things are out of your control that trying to plan every minute will just unnecessarily stress you out," she says. And once you arrive, keep an open mind.

"Let go of fixed ideas about what your vacation should look like," says Sarah Schlichter, a senior editor at the online travel magazine *Smarter Travel*. "Sometimes the things that go wrong end up being a great adventure."

Manage the jet lag

If you're crossing time zones, "choose a flight that matches your sleep schedule," says Brian Kelly, the founder and CEO of the Points Guy, a travel-advice and review company. "For example, if you're going to Europe, book a flight as late in the day as possible," he says. "I also like to exhaust myself beforehand by taking a Barry's Bootcamp class to make it easier to fall asleep on the plane." Kelly books flights on "quiet planes"—newer models, like the Airbus 380 and 350 and the Boeing 787, which are less noisy, with better airflow and lower lighting. Once you land, "drink cold brew, and push through that first day so that you can align your sleep cycle," he says.

WIGGLE ROOM IS KEY
"Underschedule each day. That way, you can take spontaneous side trips or just hang out and relax," Schlichter says.

"**SMILE AND BE NICE** TO THE FLIGHT ATTENDANTS. THE NICER YOU ARE, THE NICER THEY'LL BE," KELLY SAYS.

Scout things out

"As soon as you arrive, take a 15-minute stroll around your hotel to get a general sense of your surroundings," Klein says. "Maybe there's a beautiful park to run in instead of going to the hotel gym, or a charming café for your morning coffee instead of Starbucks." Getting the lay of the land early on helps boost your comfort level. Plus, it's a real letdown if you spot a cute place but no longer have time to visit.

Go to the source

Strike up conversations with locals, and you'll learn about off-the-grid spots that can really make your trip. "I always recommend sitting at the bar of restaurants. You get direct access to the residents who have the best recommendations for what to see, do, and eat in the city—the bartenders," Klein says. Kelly and Schlichter also suggest using platforms like Airbnb Experiences or Eatwith, which let you connect with local people and businesses while traveling.

Adapt your workouts

Kelly likes to book classes for an immersive experience. And if you want a quick sweat, don't let a lack of a hotel gym or a safe running route stop you. "If the room has space for an ironing board, it has space for you to work up a sweat," Klein says. "I've asked hotels to deliver five-pound weights I can keep in my room. Download a seven-minute workout app, and get moving."

Make your flight more luxe

"I'm a fan of wearing undereye masks in the air and using Evian Facial Spray right before I try to sleep," Kelly says. "I'm not a germaphobe—I rarely wipe my seat—but I bring hand sanitizer to use on my computer and phone since they get so dirty." Schlichter, on the other hand, suggests wiping down the armrests, seat-back TV screen, tray, and seat-belt with a sanitizing wipe.

Tweak your mind-set

Klein tries to approach a new place as if she is a guest in someone else's home. "Be grateful for the opportunity to experience a new culture that you may never return to," she says. "Remind yourself to embrace all that is different because by keeping an open mind, you will leave more well rounded, educated, connected, and emotionally rich."

Schedule in breaks

Make sure to pencil downtime into your itinerary. "For me, it's a 45-minute window daily when I can work out, nap, or read a book without speaking to anyone," Klein says. "Taking that time will make you a happier, more relaxed, and more spontaneous travel partner." Schlichter's technique is to underschedule each day. This gives you time to recover if something goes wrong and makes space for spontaneous side trips or coffee breaks.

If you're feeling burned out from trying to do too much on a trip, consider taking a vacation from your vacation, Schlichter says. Skip the sightseeing tour and relax in your hotel with room service, park yourself at a café for some laid-back people watching, or treat yourself to a massage at a spa.

Hunt down local studios

You seek out authentic restaurants while you're on vacation. Why not look for local gyms and fitness studios too? "Earlier this year, I went to Johannesburg, South Africa, and signed up to train with a 'boxing grannies' group. There was nothing more motivating than having someone twice your age kicking your butt," Kelly says. You get in a workout, it's a fun way to meet locals, and visiting studios can help you explore different parts of the city.

Make vacation happiness last

Using your trip as motivation to take action will help you hold on to the sense of excitement you felt while you were away. "Do you wish you'd been better able to communicate with the locals? Take a language class. Were you inspired by the incredible wildlife you saw? Donate to a conservation organization," Schlichter says. You'll feel connected to your getaway long after you've returned home. ■

Hover your phone's camera over this smart code to get ideas for healthy travel snacks.