

FITNESS ON THE MOVE

IFBB bikini pro Michelle Brannan explains how to stay on track while travelling

YOUR FITNESS SCHEDULE and gym routine are in place, you're preparing food and organising meals... then comes the holiday season.

Whether it's a welcome getaway or a business trip, travelling abroad can derail all your good training and nutrition intentions. So, how do you keep your fitness lifestyle on track when you're away from home?

If you are often away from home on business, you should already have a plan in place.

Some people cook all their food before they leave, freeze it and take it with them. Most airlines let you take food on board but although this is a good idea if you're competing or working, it's not much fun on holiday.

If you're going away for a break, pre-plan how much time you want to relax. Sometimes a break from a routine is well deserved. If you have a clear idea of what you will allow yourself it can help fight temptation and avoid a total loss of self-control that you might otherwise encounter during your holiday.

Once a year, usually in December, I allow myself to go totally off-plan and don't count calories or even think about what I'm eating. I'll have whatever I like, whenever I like. Sometimes it's nice to do this. Other times, I set some boundaries.

But rather than cooking all my food and taking it with me, I try and find a balance by seeking out foods that fit closely to my usual diet.

I take some dry foods with me, like oats, plain nuts, rice cakes, whey protein, casein and protein bars to save having to find alternatives in local shops. I am a lover of low fat dairy products as a good source of quick and easy protein though, and you can pick

up Total Greek yogurt or low-fat quark pretty much anywhere.

Sticking closely to your usual way of eating doesn't mean you can't eat out. I've hardly ever been to a restaurant and not been able to eat something on the menu, unless I'm only a week out from a show.

It's almost always possible to make good choices in a restaurant so you can still enjoy eating different foods and taking part in social occasions. I would usually stick to lean proteins and vegetables with no added oils, and maybe a small dessert and/or glass of wine.

ALCOHOL INTAKE

Most people like to enjoy a glass of wine on holiday but for some reason being away from home means we let our inhibitions down and drink much more. As I said, once a year I allow a holiday when I have whatever I like but other times I restrict my alcohol intake.

The problem with alcohol is the way it is metabolised. If you drink an alcoholic beverage, regardless of the calories in the drink or mixer, the alcohol itself will be metabolised first, which essentially means you will stop burning fat and carbohydrates while your body tries to rid your system of alcohol. This isn't helpful to any of us.

Alcohol can also lower blood sugar levels, which can encourage cravings for sweets and other foods you wouldn't have under normal circumstances.

Another thing to bear in mind when eating out is the impact a sudden increase in salt has on the body. If you cook your own meals you're probably conservative with adding salt and salt-based seasonings but this isn't always the case with fast food and restaurants.

Salt tends to be added in abundance, as a chef's main concern is taste. Too much sodium in foods can cause you to retain water in the cells and under the skin, which may make you feel like you've suddenly become fat.

We all know it is impossible to get fat after one meal, your body is probably just retaining fluid. The key is not to stress and not starve yourself the next day. Just make sure you drink plenty of water and fill up on fresh vegetables containing natural potassium and let your body regulate itself.

TRAINING ON HOLIDAY

There is no need to stop training on holiday. If you do some research you should be able to find a gym nearby.

Visiting the gym a few times on holiday will energise you and stop you feeling guilty if you do enjoy the food a little more.

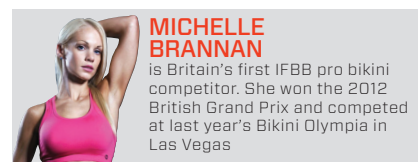
But it might be the perfect opportunity to have a break from training. Your body does need a rest from time to time and might benefit from one.

If you do want to stay active you can use your surroundings to burn energy: a walk along the beach, a day's sightseeing or trekking can burn a lot of calories. Swimming in the hotel pool is also a great form of low impact exercise. You could even create your own workout circuit incorporating bodyweight exercises, sprints, swimming and plyometrics.

If you commit to sticking closely to your usual regime while travelling then you will need to prioritise some time in the day to fit things in.

You can probably find an hour in the day instantly by spending less time on social media or encouraging your travel companions to go for a walk with you. Book an excursion or get up early to get your training done, that way it won't infringe on your day.

Stay active while on your travels but if you are on holiday remember to enjoy yourself.



MICHELLE BRANNAN is Britain's first IFBB pro bikini competitor. She won the 2012 British Grand Prix and competed at last year's Bikini Olympia in Las Vegas

HEALTHY HOLIDAY SNACKS

- LOW-FAT DAIRY
- FRUIT
- BEEF JERKY
- PROTEIN SHAKE
- TINNED TUNA
- RICE CAKES
- PROTEIN BAR (DON'T GO OVERBOARD!)
- PLAIN NUTS
- NUT BUTTERS

HOLIDAY EXERCISE

- FIND A LOCAL GYM
- WALK OR JOG ALONG THE BEACH
- TREKKING
- SWIMMING
- SIGHTSEEING
- WATER SPORTS



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