

## **Training 101 – Travel Advice**

So you just stepped off the plane after spending hours cramped into a tiny seat between some huge guy who's hogging the armrest and an old man that keeps trying to sleep on your shoulder. You're cramped, tired, and have developed cankles\* – not to mention pissed off because they charged you an extra \$150 to check your 15 lb bike. Best of all – you have a big race in a few days. And you plan to do it all again in a few weeks. Keeping up with your training and making sure you feel fresh for your race has always been a challenge after a long day of traveling. Here are some things you can do to fight those challenges and end up with some great races under your belt.

\*cankles – when the ankles are so fat or swelled that they have become indistinguishable from the calves, therefore becoming one in the same

### **Before the Flight**

- If you are traveling for a Sunday race, I recommend arriving on Thursday. You can turn your travel day into a light training or recovery day and then use Friday and Saturday for warm-ups for your race. It also gives you extra time to recover from your flight.
- It's not a bad idea to take your goggles, swimsuit and running gear in your carryon. If they lose your bags (which they often do), you'll still be able to go on a run or swim to loosen up and get the jelly out of your legs.
- Limit the amount of weight you have in your backpack. If you have to walk around with it in the airport, make sure the straps are on both shoulders. Carrying your backpack around puts a lot of strain on your shoulders, which could undo the months of hard training you've done in the pool.

### **During the Flight**

- Flying dehydrates the body more than usual, so it's really important to hydrate as much as possible before and during the flight. Don't be afraid to ask for two drinks at a time on the plane. What I find works well is getting a juice and a water. Also, you can bring a water bottle with you. If you don't want to buy one, take an empty water bottle with you through security and fill it up on the other side. It's also not a bad idea to take something like Emergen-C Powder or electrolyte tablets, i.e. Nuun, to put in your drink. Being dehydrated on the plane can have lasting effects for days to come, so even if you feel fine, force that extra water down and don't worry about stepping over the

- person next to you if you need to go to the toilet. This gives you a good excuse to get up and walk around anyways.
- Compression socks work wonders on that post-flight cankle problem. Put them on before your flight and take them off when you get to the hotel. You'll notice a huge difference and your legs will feel much better than they usually do after your flight.
  - This is a personal preference, but I always bring menthol/eucalyptus, cough drops or chewing gum on the flight as it seems to open up the airways when the air conditioning gets really stuffy and irritates your nose. If you're a big fan of airplane boogers, you can skip this advice.
  - Get up and walk around when you can. It will keep your legs from getting too stiff.
  - If it's a long flight, I've found I recover best if I don't sleep on the plane. It ends up just being a wasted sleep and makes me feel groggy for the whole day, so I wait until I arrive.

### **Once You Arrive**

- If it's a long flight, take a 45min to 1 hr nap when you get there. Then go for a light 30min run, bike, or swim to get the blood flowing and flush out the crap in your legs.
- Go to bed at your regular time and don't think about what time it is in your old time zone!

### **Returning Home**

- If you are a training machine and paranoid about missing a session and you get stuck at the airport, look for the airport hotel. They usually have a small gym with a treadmill or spin bike.
- Don't be afraid to get straight back into training once you get home. In my experience, it helps me recover a lot faster than taking 3 to 4 days off. My favorite post arrival training session is a long run a day after arriving home. You'll feel crappy for the first 30 or 40 minutes, but by the time you are done, you'll feel like you've flushed most of the race and travel from your legs. This should set you up for getting back into your training for your next race.

Hopefully these tips help you get more out of your training and have a better race.

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