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## On the road with...

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## Save your back: Tips for packing light and fast

Dan LeClair's philosophy for packing is simple: "Never pack more than you can carry for a mile at a dead run." That, he recalls, was a painful lesson.

"We had flown into Cancun with clothing and gear for every possibility and then shopped 'til we dropped," recounted the senior developer for EPS Software. "After touring a few neighboring towns, we had to catch a bus back to Cancun. Realizing we were behind schedule, we literally had to run to the bus stop. The locals laughed hysterically as I ran down the dusty, dirt road with two huge suitcases beating me to death while trying to keep the assorted shoulder bags attached. Never again! Now, the lighter the better."

Packing too much is not only hard on your back — it can be very expensive. Airlines are now charging fees for overweight, oversized and excess baggage. Susan Foster, author of Smart Packing for Today's Travelers ( [www.smartpacking.com](http://www.smartpacking.com) ), says the penalties can be as steep as \$240 per bag on a one way trip.

Rosemary Barnhart, World Cruise Hostess for Crystal Symphony, traveled recently from Los Angeles to Miami. Although she checked just one bag, she was still fined \$25 since it was slightly over the 50-pound limit. On a trip to Singapore to visit family, Desiree Koh had one extra check-on — a slim, lightweight box containing a single golf club. She had paid only \$35 for the gift for her uncle, but was charged \$113 by the airline to get it there. Derek Demers, on a recent trip home from Honolulu, was told to get his 90-pound bag down under 70 pounds or pay \$80." Knowing that the flight was overbooked, he simply responded, "Do you take Visa?"

So, whether you want to save your back or your buck, here are some tips on how to pack everything you need for a one- to two-week trip in a 22" wide, 9" deep and 14" tall (the size mandated by airline regulation restrictions) carry-on, roll-on bag:

Plan ahead:

- Use clear bags: Use plastic zip-lock freezer bags to pack undergarments and socks. They're transparent (for faster safety inspections), inexpensive, and protected from spills.
- Buy miniatures: Buy sample sizes of deodorant, shampoo, and cosmetics.

- Think double duty: An oversized T-shirt can be used for sleeping and as a pool cover-up. Consider a sports watch with an alarm instead of packing an alarm clock. Silk long johns are not only great for sleeping; if the weather turns unexpectedly cold or the convention hall puts the air conditioning on overdrive, you can slip them under your suit.
- Go with quick dry: Pack only one workout outfit made out of the new quick-dry, breathable materials. After your workout, wear them into the shower and then wring them out. They'll be dry by morning. Consider a microfiber sleepwear set, too, which can be washed and quickly dried.

Simplify your wardrobe:

- Pack a minimum number of outfits: You don't need a different outfit for every day. Instead, select comfortable, wrinkle-resistant clothing you can mix and match (for a great selection of travel-friendly clothing, check out [www.magellans.com](http://www.magellans.com)). A wrinkle-resistant suit can be worn several days. Just pack a different shirt or blouse for each day. At least one should be a neutral colored, quick-dry shirt that can be washed in the hotel sink if your trip gets unexpectedly extended. Even for a two week vacation, you can get by with three bottoms, three tops, and three vests/sweaters/jackets if you select those that mix and match with each other.
- Keep to one color scheme: Pick from black, navy, brown, and olive since they're professional-looking, don't show dirt easily, and match with so many other colors. One color scheme will reduce your need for extra accessories like shoes, ties, belts, purses and jewelry.
- Pack just one pair of dress shoes: Make sure they're comfortable enough to wear every day (no high heels ladies). Avoid steel shanks which will stop you at the metal detectors. Then pack a pair of sneakers. You are going to workout, aren't you?

Select travel-friendly, wrinkle-free clothing:

- Stay away from 100% cotton: Look for microfiber or 60% cotton/40% polyester shirts. They're breathable and more wrinkle-resistant. Get your dress shirts folded at the dry cleaner's for easy packing. Cotton shirts, pants and jackets now available with 3-5% lycra® — they stretch for comfort, are more wrinkle-resistant than 100% cotton.
- Do the wrinkle test. When shopping, give the all your clothes the wrinkle test before you buy — crush the fabric in your hand and release. If it's full of wrinkles, don't buy it. You don't want to spend your evenings ironing, do you?
- Skip the winter coat. Instead, invest in a high quality, wrinkle resistant, lightweight all-weather coat with zip-in lining.

Excerpted from *How to Stay Healthy & Fit on the Road* by Joanne Lichten, PhD. Dr. Jo helps busy people stay healthy, sane, and productive through her books, articles, and speaking engagements to companies and conventions. She can be reached at [drjo@drjo.com](mailto:drjo@drjo.com). Her web site is [www.drjo.com](http://www.drjo.com).

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