

8 tips for making your business travel worth the hassle

[Business](#)



Business travel is a crucial part of many jobs. For example, during my 10 years in sales, my weekly travels took me to more than a dozen countries and nearly every U. S. state. I traveled so often, in fact, that I was on a first-name basis with the parking attendant at my hometown airport garage. And while traveling to meet face-to-face with clients or colleagues is critical to business success, it can also take time away from our regular work duties, not to mention our home lives. Here are some tips for maximizing your business and personal time when you travel.

1. Save projects for your flight.

We often view flight time as time wasted. But with a little planning, those hours can turn into valuable time to get things done. For example, save projects for the plane ride that match your flight time. During an uninterrupted coast-to-coast flight, you'll have time to tackle big assignments. Save the easier projects that don't require as much sustained focus for the shorter flights or layovers. I often use shorter return flights to compile my expense reports. During a long morning flight, consider doing the most important projects first while your mind is still fresh. After a few flights, take time to reflect on what's working for you and what isn't, so you can make adjustments.

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2. Do some reading.

Flight time also is an excellent opportunity to catch up on reading those reports or articles you've been setting aside for later. Set yourself up with in-flight reading materials on your smartphone or tablet by using a save-for-

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later app like Pocket for iOS or Android to collect the pieces that interest you. Before long, you'll be well on your way to having your own customized library for that next four-hour flight.

3. Catch up on a podcast.

The world of podcasting covers a huge range of subjects, from business and entertainment to news and sports. Plane rides offer great opportunities to catch up on podcasts that require time commitments many of us don't often have. There are a number of podcasting apps available for mobile, including Podbean, Stitcher and Apple Podcasts (iOS) which allow users to collect and then watch or listen to their favorite podcasts on the go. Just like budgeting projects with flight time, you can budget time for podcasts based on the length of the flight. The night before I travel, I download episodes of some of my favorite podcasts like Hidden Brain, Marketplace and Invisibilia so I have plenty of time to listen from wheels up to touchdown.

4. Learn a foreign language.

Maybe you've spent an entire week out of town working hard on a project and now you're returning home on a Friday afternoon, ready to focus on something other than work. Rather than working during your return flight, consider using that time to increase your skills by learning a foreign language. There are a number of methods, including books, apps and language immersion programs like Rosetta Stone. Fair warning, you may get a strange look from the person sitting next to you if you're the type who likes to practice out loud.

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5. Stay secure.

Computer security is a big concern for all of us who travel, and Wi-Fi can often be the pathway to trouble. To stay secure while on the road, consider using Apple AirPort Express, which allows you to create your own Wi-Fi network anywhere. This approach not only enables you to protect your firewall access from hackers, it can also save you money by avoiding the many per-device charges for Wi-Fi services.

6. Learn a new hobby.

If you're not looking to spend more time working, reading or catching up on TV during your travels, consider learning a new hobby. For example, I actually used some of my downtime at the hotel to teach myself how to juggle. Not only was I learning a new hobby that my kids love, but it turned out to be a great way to relieve workday stress. You might consider trying new hobbies that you can only focus on while traveling away from home.

7. Do some car shopping.

Are you in the market to buy a new vehicle soon? If so, you can use your rental reservation to test drive a make or model of vehicle that you've had your eye on. For example, our Emerald Club loyalty members can choose any car they'd like from what's available on the Emerald Aisle, so you can use your rental to test drive a particular make or model. It's much easier to get a feel for a certain vehicle when you spend time in it for an entire day or more. Pop the hood, test the radio and use your driving time to get a really good feel for whether it's the car for you.

8. Connect with old friends.

A great way to get more out of your travel time is to see if any of your personal or professional friends live where you're traveling. I'm a Seton Hall University alum, so when I travel out to the east coast or New York City I like to connect with my old college buddies, and I'm always glad I did. So, set up a lunch or dinner date with friends while you're in town. You'll appreciate the chance to catch up and reminisce.

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When it comes to making the most of time spent on the road, these are all approaches that have worked for me. By looking at your time on the road as an opportunity, you may surprise yourself at how productive your next business trip can be.