

Tips for de-stressing vacation

Since vacation is supposed to be relaxing, how come getting ready for it is so stressful? And sometimes things happen on vacation that are, well, just not that relaxing. Read on for some tips on how to minimize travel related stress.

BEFORE YOU GO:

Get organized / plan ahead: Create two lists:

- Packing list – so you don't forget to bring something important and waste time trying to find it at your destination.
- To do list with deadlines for each item: So you don't leave something important until the last minute (e.g. finding a cat sitter) ... or worse until you are unable to do it (e.g. you put off getting cash for the trip and now the bank is closed).

Organize your travel documents. Get a plastic envelope, file folder or other item that is easy to carry in your purse or backpack. Before you leave put all your travel documents in there, so you aren't scrambling to find your hotel reservation or Google map directions.

Don't be too reachable: Set boundaries with your work colleagues before you leave about contacting you during your vacation. Checking your email every day or taking every call from work prevents you from getting the renewal you need from vacation. It also prevents your co-workers from learning alternate ways of getting things done when you aren't there.

ONCE YOU ARRIVE:

Plan in downtime: Although it's tempting to try and take advantage of every activity, overscheduling your vacation can lead to a lot of stress. Schedule in some time to just chill every day. This can be especially important if you are traveling with children.

Schedule alone time: Being with your co-travelers 24/7 can get overwhelming after a while. Consider your needs for a reprieve. This could be a short time every day for a short respite, or a few hours at some point during the trip to do something you really want to do on your own. Discuss your need for time alone time ahead of your trip to avoid conflict.

Change up your relationship to technology: A vacation can be a good opportunity to use portable technologies like cell phones a bit differently. Consider putting your phone on silent

during certain times of the day, or perhaps even not carrying it at all times. Try reducing TV and computer time also – discover other ways to use this time.

Be flexible: Life happens. Sometimes there's a storm the day you planned to go boating. Or the kids have a meltdown at the fancy restaurant you picked. Be willing to go with the flow when things don't go according to plan, and be ready with an alternative.