

Leave chaos behind on your next business trip

Business travel can be daunting. Overbooked flights, weather delays, long security lines and even, sometimes, unruly crowds.

Here are a few tips and tricks that can help you navigate the skies with ease and grace:

- **Be efficient.** We're allowed a one-ounce ziplock bag to hold shampoos, lotions, etc. Have the bag ready to go with containers that hold a maximum of three ounces each. Keep in mind that your expensive moisturizer, favorite lipstick, cologne or toothpaste you planned to use when you land are all at risk of being confiscated.

- **Check in ahead of time.** Most frequent-flyer carriers provide a service to check in online, typically up to 24 hours before departure, and it's easy to do.

From the comfort of your home or office, you can access the airline's Web site, check yourself in and print your boarding pass. This is particularly time-saving if you're checking bags since once you arrive at the airport, you head straight to the area labeled "online check-in," which has short lines, if any.

If you have only a carry-on, head straight to security with your boarding pass. If you're unable to check in online ahead of time, many airports now have self-service kiosks where you can print the boarding pass yourself.

Frequent flyers for United can download United Desktop to their PCs. This is a tool that provides United flight times and can be utilized even if you're not connected to the Internet. It's ideal if you're looking to go standby earlier or



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face the possibility of missing your flight.

- **Sign up as a premier member of a rental car agency.** This is a free service and enables you to go directly to the parking lot of most rental car agencies.

Rent cars with an in-car navigation system. It may cost you a few extra dollars — but when you're in an unfamiliar city, it's

worth its weight in gold.

- **Points matter.** True road warriors are easy to spot. They're loyal to one airline, one car rental agency and one hotel chain. Points will accumulate and can be cashed in for free nights, free flights and free car rentals. The airlines offer premium seating with extra leg room and complimentary upgrades.

There are hundreds of credit-card companies providing point systems, but hotel credit cards seem to be the best bet. If you accumulate enough hotel points for seven nights in a five-star hotel in the same amount of time you earn enough points for a free flight, you still come out ahead with the hotel.

If you're unable to use your points when you want to, check out Points.com. This Web site allows you to swap points for services and merchandise.

- **Navigate DIA with ease.** If you're looking for the best place to eat, check out Jimmy's on concourse A. If you need reading materials, there are great bookstores on the south side of the main ter-

минаl next to the yogurt shop as well as on concourse B.

Many of us like to select our own movies to watch when we fly. Rent DVDs and portable players at Inmotion on concourse B. Drop off items in most major airports across the country.

If security lines are long, you can walk to concourse A and catch the train to concourses B and C. There are also premier lines for frequent travelers at all security stations. This can make the difference between making your flight or missing it completely.

- **Parking, the never-ending issue.** Current construction on the west side of DIA has limited spaces. Pick a usual spot and be consistent. It makes it easier to know exactly where you're going once you get off the plane.

Valet parking is a wonderful service if you have the budget. It's \$27/day (only \$9 more per day than garage parking) and is available on both the east and west sides of level 4. To get there, follow signs to "Pickup" and you'll see the valet signs.

- **Respect TSA.** We've all witnessed some humiliating moments getting through security, such as removing belt buckles, shoes, socks, watches and any metal items on your body, plus the confiscation of personal items.

Perhaps the experience will seem less intrusive if you consider the TSA as the airport warriors just doing their job. Make it easy on yourself and pay attention to the rules.

Use containers that have the words "three ounces" written on them and

have them in plastic bags.

Create your own system for getting through security so you remember your laptop, tickets, belt, shoes and any other items you had to remove. Many travelers arrive at their destination and realize they inadvertently left some of their items at security. You may or may not get them back.

- **Be good to yourself.** When you're traveling for business or pleasure, indulge in the process. Valet park. Upgrade. Enjoy a glass of wine.

Traveling takes its toll, both physically and emotionally. There are some things you can do to be kind to your body and mind. Get a carry-on bag that's light and fits your style. Try not to overpack. Wear comfortable shoes. Dress warm. Purchase water on the concourse. Treat yourself to a 15-minute massage on concourse B. Read on the plane; don't feel like you always have to work.

- **Be nice.** This is the most important thing you can do when you travel. Your experience affects and is affected by those around you. Tip your valet, bellhop, taxi driver and waitress. Smile. Pause if you get frustrated. Avoid giving dirty looks or making snide comments.

Everyone is doing the best they can. Many are at their job, and others are stressed and anxious. Small acts of kindness on your end will result in a better experience for those around you, and ultimately for you.

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