

WORST-CASE SCENARIO®

HOW TO SURVIVE A NIGHTMARE BUSINESS TRIP

FLYING IN COACH

1

Be prepared.

Take supplies with you to make the flight more pleasant:

- Good food. Coach-class meals have never been stellar, and you're guaranteed a good meal if you bring something good onboard. Plus, you can eat whenever you wish.
- Neck pillow. The inflatable pillow makes sleeping and even sitting much more comfortable.
- Water. Avoid becoming dehydrated by the plane's air conditioning system.
- Lip balm. Avoid uncomfortable and unsightly chapped lips.

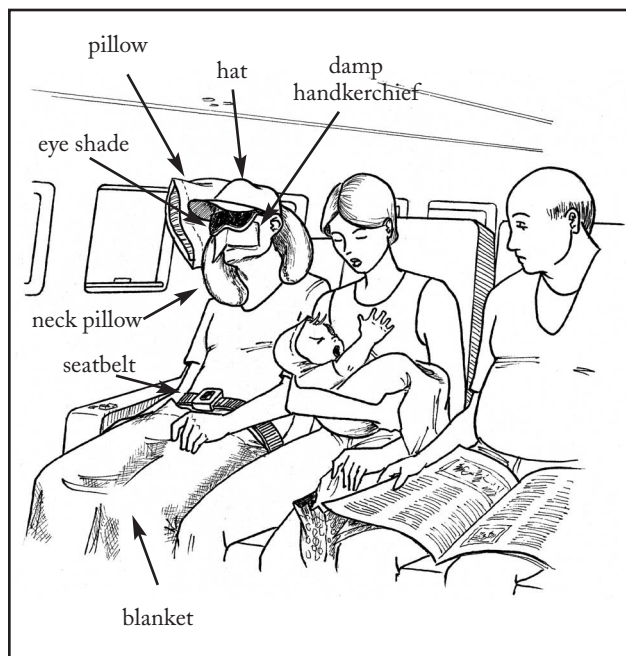
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Get a seat with extra legroom.

The bulkheads and exit rows usually offer the most room to stretch out. A middle seat in an exit row may be more comfortable than an aisle seat in a non-exit row. Make sure, however, that the seatbacks recline—certain exit rows have non-reclining chairs.

3 Request a seat at the rear of the plane, in a row with open seats.

The rear is not only the safest area in the event of a crash, but it will allow you to board immediately after the first-class passengers, giving you the first available access to the overhead storage bins as well as pillows and blankets. Open seats will allow you to stretch out. Choose a window seat. If you sit on the aisle, you risk being disturbed every time someone in your row wants to get up or every time a person passes on the way to the lavatory. With a window seat, you'll be in control of the shade and have a wall to lean against.



4 Place your carry-on bag in the overhead compartment.

Keep the space under the seat in front of you clear, so you can stretch. If there is no room in the overhead compartment for your bag, place it under another open seat on your row. If you must stash it beneath the seat in front of you, plan to use it as a footrest by pulling it out slightly.

5 Make yourself comfortable.

Remove your shoes, as feet tend to expand slightly during flight. Recline your seat to a comfortable position. Lift the between-seat armrest to give yourself a little extra room if you have an empty seat next to you. Place an inflatable neck pillow around your neck, or use an airline pillow. Lean against the wall of the plane.

6 When the seatbelt sign is turned off, move about the cabin.

Walk and stretch in the galley area to keep your legs from stiffening and to prevent blood clots from forming.

7 When sleeping, insert cotton in your ears and place a moist handkerchief over your nose.

Low-level engine noise can disrupt sleep patterns. For better rest, filter out noise using sterile cotton instead of ear plugs, so the inner ear can adjust to cabin pressure changes. If sterile cotton is not available, use noise-canceling headphones connected to a tape or

CD player. A damp handkerchief over your nose will prevent your nasal passages from drying out. Block out as much of the light as possible. Close the window shade. Don an eye mask, or use an article of clothing (sweater, jacket, hat) as a blindfold.

8 Use deep-breathing techniques to relax.

Breathe in deeply through your nose, then out through your mouth. Focus only on the breaths you are taking—say to yourself, “Sleeeeeeeep. Sleeeeeeeep. Sleeeeeeeep,” as you inhale and exhale. Do not think about work, about your big meeting tomorrow, about how much you would rather be at home—think only about sleep.

Be Aware

Keep your seatbelt visible at all times. If your seatbelt is not in plain sight, you risk being awakened by the flight crew for a belt check.

LOST LUGGAGE

1 File a report at the airport.

As soon as you realize your bags are missing, go immediately to the lost-luggage counter and file a report. Get a copy of the report, and write down the name of the person who helps you and the report number.

2 Obtain the direct phone number for the baggage counter.

Airport personnel may give you a toll-free number to call to check on the status of your bags. Take the number, but ask for the number of the lost-baggage counter at the airport itself.

3 Request compensation.

Some airlines will issue a check on the spot to cover the immediate cost of your buying clothing or essentials. Or the airline may give you a toiletries bag to cover your grooming needs until your bag is retained.

4 Call the airport baggage counter regularly.

Do not assume the airline will call you.

5 Be prepared for a two-day delay.

Do not assume that your bag will be put on the next departing flight to your destination: Airlines place recovered luggage only on their own planes, not on those of other carriers. If the next flight is not until late the following evening, you may not see your bag for two days.

6 Purchase necessary items before you leave the airport.

If you arrive at your destination on a holiday or late at night, you may not be able to shop for essentials in town.

Be Aware

- If luggage is lost rather than just delayed, an airline's liability in the United States is limited to \$1,250 per passenger, no matter how many bags have been lost. On international flights, the liability limit is about \$9 per pound of checked baggage. Reimbursement may take months.
- To make your bag easier to spot, place a colored ribbon on the handle or a distinctive strap around the bag before checking it.
- Watch the bags as they come down the conveyor belt to the carousel, even if you do not have immediate access to it. You will be able to see if anyone else takes your bag.
- Write your name and the phone number of the place you will be staying for the first two days of your trip on two business cards. Place one inside your luggage and one in a card holder on the outside of your bag. (Never place your home address and phone in a visible identification tag. You do not want to advertise that you are away from home.)
- Dress for the worst—wear clothing on the plane that you can live in (and with) for two days. Anticipate that you might be giving your presentation or attending the meeting in what you are wearing on the plane.
- Carry essential medical and hygiene items, as well as any irreplaceable presentation materials, in your carry-on luggage.

CHEAP HOTEL

- 1 Request a room with a quiet location.**
Avoid rooms near elevators, vending machines, the ice maker, the parking lot, or a noisy bar. Ask for a room at the end of the hall so there is less foot traffic outside the door.
- 2 Check the mechanicals and plumbing.**
Before unpacking, check air conditioning, heat, television, lights, and water pressure. If any are not working properly or are otherwise unacceptable, request a new room.
- 3 Remove the bedspread.**
Cheap hotels do not regularly clean bedspreads. Use towels for warmth. Call the front desk to request extra towels if there aren't enough in the room.
- 4 Clip the curtains closed.**
If the curtains do not fully close, secure the two sides together using whatever you have on hand—paper or binder clips, tape, or pins and needles from a sewing kit.
- 5 Check the mattress firmness.**
If the bed is too soft, place the mattress on the floor.
- 6 Check the clock.**
Make sure the alarm is not set to go off in the middle of the night. Avoid the wake-up service—it is

notoriously unreliable in cheap hotels. Set the alarm clock, or carry a travel clock with an alarm.

7 Avoid the morning shower rush.

Cheap hotels may run out of hot water anytime between 7 and 9 A.M. Shower earlier or later.

Be Aware

- Travel with lightbulbs bright enough to use for reading.
- Travel with two small rubber doorstops. For security, wedge one firmly under the door to your room and the other under the door that adjoins the next room.
- Travel with snacks, including protein bars and instant hot cereal. Cheap hotels may have no restaurant, no in-room coffee, and no vending machines. Even if there is a restaurant, the food might be terrible.

DULL TOWN

Ask the locals for recommendations.

Ask the hotel clerk (or better yet, a porter) for a restaurant where you can “sample the local flavor.” Most towns have at least one dish, restaurant, or tourist attraction that residents consider special.

Adopt an alias.

Pretend to be someone else when you go out. Be a secret service agent, an astronaut, a mime—whatever

your fantasy is. Pretend you have an accent. Cross-dressing is not recommended for all towns, however.

Do the opposite of everything you normally do.

If you usually go to bed early, stay out late. If you usually drink beer, drink coffee. Talk to the people you would normally ignore or avoid.

Play cards.

If none of the above works, obtain a deck of cards. Solitaire is a great time killer. Build a house of cards, or try to toss as many as you can across the room and into the wastebasket.