

Twelve easy exercises you can do anywhere in the world

By Louise Wedgwood,

- **No gym clothes or weights? No worries! Stay in your hotel room and you can still get the blood pumping.**

Let's be honest, it can be a challenge for regular travellers to maintain fitness – jetlag, packed meeting schedules, local weather conditions and lack of familiarity with training facilities can combine to kill the buzz of even the most ardent fitness junkie.

Meanwhile, hotel gyms are not always the most inspiring place to spend precious free time, even if you did remember to pack your gym kit.

Sometimes you just need a sure-fire way to get your body moving that's simple, fuss-free and can be completed literally anywhere.

Mobility

First, work on mobility – how well you can actively move your joints through a range of motion.

The back arch and curl can help ease lower back tension from sitting.

A **back arch and curl** will improve your spine mobility and reduce lower back tension from sitting. Kneel on all fours with hands under your shoulders and knees under hips. Round your back upwards, curl your hips under and lower your head. Then reverse, pushing your hips and your head up. Repeat slowly 10 times.

The **standing knee hug** improves hip mobility and alleviate tight hips from all that sitting. In a standing position, pull one knee up as high as you can, using only your leg strength. Then grab it, hug it in and upwards to your chest. Release and step forward with that leg and repeat on the other side.

The **swinging arm crossover** improves shoulder mobility and chest tightness from sitting. Swing both arms out to your sides at shoulder height, and then across your chest towards the opposite side. Swap which arm is on top as you keep swinging for 10 repetitions.

Cardio

Get the blood flowing to oxygenate your body and brain, and look after your heart. Complete both exercises, then repeat.

Try the 'Mountain Climber' to get your heart working.

Mountain climber: start in plank position with hands on the floor under shoulders, body in a straight line. Bring one knee into your chest, then the other, moving quickly as if you're running. Continue for 30 to 45 seconds.

Squat jumps: start with feet hip width apart, then hinge at the hips and push them backwards, bending your knees until your hips and knees are level. Keep the chest lifted. Then blast off the floor as high as you can, swinging your arms for momentum. Land softly with bent knees, and repeat. Start with 10 and increase the repetitions to suit your fitness. Need to take it easy? Leave out the explosive jump but increase the repetitions.

Muscle strength and endurance

Strong muscles mean healthier blood sugar and cholesterol levels, and fewer aches and pains. If time allows, repeat all exercises.

Superman to push-up will strengthen your lower and upper back, hamstrings, glutes, chest, shoulders, triceps. Lie on your stomach and reach your arms out in front (like Superman flying). Keep your shoulders away from your ears and your neck long, not arched. Squeeze your glutes (buttocks) and lift your shoulders and legs off the floor. Hold. Lower your legs, put your hands under your shoulders and push up, keeping your body in a straight line from head to toes. Lower and repeat.

The **wall squat** strengthens thighs, hips and buttocks. Press your lower back into the wall and slide down until your knees are at right angles, ankles under knees. Squeeze your glutes to hold the squat for 30 to 60 seconds (or longer).

A **single-leg deadlift** strengthens your hamstrings (thighs), glutes (buttocks) and back, as well as developing balance. Stand on your left leg. Keeping your chest forward and back straight, bend at the hips to touch your left foot with your right hand. Bend your knee to avoid rounding your lower back. Return to standing and repeat, with control, 15 times. Then swap sides.

Flexibility

Stretching prevents stiffness and poor posture. Hold each stretch for at least 15 seconds. Any less, and your stretch reflex will be working against you.

Slow, controlled lunges are great for lengthening hamstrings and quads.

A **standing forward bend** stretches your hamstrings, shoulders and chest. Stand with your feet hip-width apart, hands clasped behind your back (or hold a towel between them). Lift your chest up, then bend forward at the hips. If your lower back is rounding, bend your knees to bring your chest closer to your thighs. Draw your upper arms back towards your head.

From there, move into a **low lunge with quad stretch** (for your hip flexors, hamstrings and quads). Take a long step backwards with one foot. Bend the front knee to place your hands on the ground on either side of your front foot. Make sure the front knee is above the front foot and your spine is long.

Reach your chest forward, keep straightening the back leg, and sink into the stretch. Hold for 15 seconds or longer, then drop the back knee to the floor. Bend the knee and try to reach back to hold and pull in that foot for a quad stretch. Hold, and switch sides.

A glute stretch can help after you've done a lot of sitting, such as on a flight.

Lying down glute stretch: lie on your back and bend your left leg, with your foot on the floor. Place the right ankle on your left knee and reach behind the left thigh. Draw the left thigh towards you, and gently push the right knee away to increase the stretch. Swap sides.

Lower back twist: lying on your back, bend your knees and place your feet on the floor. With your arms out to the side like a T, let the knees fall to one side while looking over the opposite shoulder. Keep your shoulders on the floor.

This suite of complementary exercises is designed to benefit any busy executive. But if you have particular health concerns or injuries, consider checking in with your doctor or physio about any adjustments needed.

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AXIS TRAVEL CENTRE •
311 Glen Osmond Road, Glenunga, 5064,
South Australia. TEL: 08 84331111
EMAIL: axis@axistravel.com.au
WEB: www.axistravel.com.au
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