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Easy air travel tips for simplifying your trip

By Jennifer Raftis, CPO



Professional Organizer, Jennifer Raftis, CPO founded Efficiency Matters, LLC to help you with all of your organizing needs for your home and business. She is a Certified Professional Organizer and an active board member with NAPO, National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals. She is also an independent representative for The Container Store and has expertise in designing closets, garages, pantries, playrooms and more. In addition, she is a Corporate Organizing and Productivity Consultant and has worked with Fortune 500 companies across the U.S. Another large part of her business is move management especially working with seniors who are downsizing. She and her husband have lived in Moraga for 30 years, raising 3 kids and working countless volunteer hours with many local non-profit organizations and schools. Jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com, 925-698-3756 www.efficiencymattersllc.com dry-cleaning bags to separate your items if you don't have packing cubes.

I'm so happy that we are all able to travel once again. I recently traveled across the country to my annual organizing conference and decided to add a couple of fun stops along the way. My objective was to not have to check luggage. I personally do not have confidence that my luggage will arrive at my destination when there are plane changes involved. I have trust issues . is it just me?

How was I able to pack for three different cities, one of which was a business trip and the other two for pleasure with only one carry on? Here are some of my favorite packing tips:

Tip: Pack using a capsule wardrobe - a limited selection of interchangeable clothing pieces that coordinate with each other. Pack more tops than bottoms so you can mix and match. You should be able to wear every item in 2-3 different combinations. Try on your outfits before you travel - this removes the "what do I wear" factor. Make sure to include several accessories (scarves and jewelry) to change up the look.

Tip: Pick a neutral color pallet so you only need a few pairs of shoes - a pair of heels, flats and tennis shoes. If I bring boots, I typically wear them on the airplane because they take up so much room in the suitcase.

Tip: Roll your clothes when packing. If you roll your clothes when packing your suitcase, they take up less room and it will help reduce wrinkles. There are numerous YouTube videos for reference. To roll a T-shirt, lay it out, making sure it's flat. Fold it vertically, so the two sleeves match. Then fold the sleeves over so you have a long rectangle. Now roll. When folding a dress shirt, fold the sleeves over on the back and then fold the shirt in half to form a rectangle. Roll from bottom to top. This is a simple roll that will help eliminate wrinkles, and will save space. To roll pants, lay them on a flat surface. Fold the pants placing one leg over the other, through the middle near the crotch, to fold them in half. Then, start rolling from the waist, smoothing out the fabric as you roll. If you're rolling jeans, fold one pant leg over the other and roll from the ankle to the waistline.

Tip: Use packing cubes. Packing your clothes in packing cubes can be a game changer for keeping your clothes neat and organized without overstuffing your bag. I suggest packing the cubes by categories - it also helps you pare down what you pack. Note: You can also use

Tip: Buy a few key pieces for your wardrobe that are designed for travel. Did you know they now make travel clothes that are comfortable, packable and don't wrinkle? Who knew? There are many options for both men and women. Wrinkle-free fabric such as nylon, polyester, knits and lycra make good travel clothes - these can also be quick-drying.

Tip: Pack lightly. Travelers tend to overpack and take far more than they need (you know who you are.). By thinking through your activities (day at the beach, dinner on the town, hiking, lollygagging, etc.) you can pack efficiently.

Tip: Check in early for your flight. Boarding early will give you better odds at getting an overhead bin for your carry-on. Checking in early also ensures that you are prepared with your boarding pass ready to go. These days you can have the boarding pass on your smartphone.

Here are some ways to get through security faster: Do not wear jewelry. You can pack it in your carry-on and put it on later. Do not wear any clothing with sparkles or glitter (obviously). Empty your purse before you leave the house to remove the possibility of any metal items or other no-no's that might have fallen in there (bottles with liquid, large binder clips, knives of any kind, screwdriver, measuring tape, etc.) I'm a professional organizer and always carry knives and tools in my bag, so it's critical that I empty it before traveling. Dress to undress, need I say more? Wear slip-on shoes (wear socks, because ewwww!), have nothing in your pockets and avoid wearing anything that requires a belt on traveling day. Purchase the clear, small bottles and fill them with your own shampoo, conditioner and lotion. TSA has strict guidelines about liquids that you can carry on so be sure to check the rules. Better yet, avoid all the hassle and apply for TSA PreCheckr at [tsa.gov](https://www.tsa.gov). It's good for a few years and the line is faster.

During the flight, whether you are flying across the country or only for a few hours, you want to be as relaxed and comfortable as possible. Bring a scarf or shawl because airplanes are cold and it can serve as a blanket and make sure you bring your earbuds in case you do not want to chat with your seatmate the entire way. It's a universal way of saying, "don't talk to me" (in the kindest way). Lastly, bring snack bars because . delays, delays, delays.

In conclusion, as always, being organized can make a huge difference, especially when you are traveling. The good news is that we can "move about the cabin" once again and I am grateful for the privilege of travel.

Happy trails! Stay safe!

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