

First, if you're going on a four-meal-a-day cruise or to buffet-crazy Vegas, you'll probably forget everything I write here. On the other hand, maybe this year you'll make up your mind to travel with a sensible healthy diet and exercise strategy. It sounds very simple. Just eat lower portions of low-calorie food and get regular daily exercise.



However, if it were so simple, why do you see so many senior tourists huffing and puffing around Paris, Rome, Hollywood, Las Vegas, London and New York, just barely able to drag their excess pounds along with them? And waddling along the decks of those luxury liners or carrying loaded, fourth-helping platters of pastas and pies at a Vegas buffet.

Even if you're traveling first class, with all kinds of access to rich foods, make it a habit to eat healthy foods. If you're at a buffet, take just a small portion of each goodie, but stay away from fatty meats and heavy desserts. Instead, hit the salad bar, and with just a dab of dressing, eat cooked and raw veggies. Make your main course fish or chicken, and finish up with fresh fruits for dessert. We know it is tempting to eat a lot, because statistics show that the typical senior on vacation, especially cruises, puts on ten to 20 pounds.

Just as important as keeping food intake modest while on vacation, so is engaging in regular daily exercise. Whenever there's a chance to hike, bike, swim or climb, do it for at least two hours a day in sessions of 15 to 20 minutes in each session. If you're aboard ship, sign up for exercise classes and hike or jog around the upper track deck.

If your wanderings take you to a big city, instead of jumping into taxis, walk to all the required tourist sites. If you're slowed down by advanced age, need a cane or are in a wheelchair, be sure to do as much exercise as you can handle. It's OK to spend that lazy time in the sun, especially if you've just survived a snowy winter at home, but balance it daily with a vigorous exercise regimen.

If you're staying at a resort, where there are great golf, swim, snorkel, whirlpool and gym facilities, take full advantage of them daily. And, if you can spare the dough, both from your wallet and from your thighs, indulge in some of those soothing spa massages.

Did I remember to mention those moonlit dances aboard cruise ships and at resorts? Depending on your age and inclinations, you can get lots of exercise on the dance floor, as well as a chance later in the evening for other kinds of of even more intimate weight-reducing effort. If you want to consider real action, put together several low-calorie drinks with a slow, romantic dance. Then who knows what kind of meaningful exercise will result.