

MAKING HOLIDAYS EASIER

TRAVELLING LIGHT — SOME SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

Over the years I have perfected the art of travelling really light. I'm a great fan of layering and take clothes I can wear either by themselves or layered, for example, a light cardigan that looks good buttoned up by itself or worn over a light sweater or shirt. I don't take pyjama tops, just some singlet tops or fitted T-shirts that can be outerwear, nightwear, or underwear. To protect against thieves, I have a zippered pocket for my passport and bankcard sewn into the inside of a vest or jacket I wear most days. You can also buy special travel vests with lots of pockets that are really useful and secure.

I stick up a checklist on the fridge weeks before I go, tape it to the inside of my suitcase so that I don't leave anything behind, then when I get back I cross off anything I didn't use.

I often go to conferences and at first I came back with masses of hand-outs I ended up not using; now I'm really careful about what I keep and I take a couple of big envelopes to post stuff home.

I don't bother taking things I can easily buy at my destination, for example, shampoo, but I do make sure to take things that are important for my disability, like a pen that is really easy to write with.

I plan out excursions before I go and photocopy pages from my guide book to carry with me in my day pack.

My CAT wheeled backpack has been a great success for short trips around Australia. It's very tough and well made, light, and because the wheels are relatively thick and large, it rolls very easily over different terrains. It's a little bit of a squash to get in everything I need, but I manage. It's comfortable to carry on the back as well, because there's a special zippered cover for the wheels.

Roll, don't fold, your clothes and they won't need ironing; if you're really serious about crease

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free packing, try "bundling" — see www.onebag.com for an explanation and diagrams on how to do this. This website also has an excellent packing checklist.



CAT wheeled backpack from www.cat-bags.com

WHERE TO GO AND WHERE TO STAY

Over the years I've found some destinations are much more disability-friendly than others; for example, in London, the underground is full of stairs and cheap hotels often don't have lifts, while Vienna is a fantastically disability-friendly destination, with lifts or escalators even at suburban stations, luggage lockers and good disabled access everywhere (ramps and lifts) which makes hauling my wheeled luggage around much easier.

I prefer to stay in apartments rather than hotels. For one thing, you can save money by making your own meals and you've always got somewhere to go back to for a break and a cup of tea (very important for me!). My mantra is to save on the unimportant things and spend on things that really make a difference — the money I save on breakfasts goes to a taxi to the airport, saving lots of hassle and dragging around luggage. I also prefer to stay at one destination for longer, rather than trying to cover lots of places in one trip, as the difficult part of travelling for me is getting my luggage to and from the airport and settling into a new place.



**RSI & Overuse Injury Association
of the ACT, Inc.**
Room 2.08, Griffin Centre
20 Genge Street
Canberra City

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