

TRAVEL

16

SATURDAY, MAY 8, 2010



YOGA FOR TRAVELERS

Beryl Bender Birch, a yoga teacher and author of *Beyond Power Yoga* and *Boomer Yoga*, suggested this sequence of three stretches for business travelers.

SEATED FORWARD BEND

(relieves stress in the neck, lessens tensions in the hips and lower back caused by lengthy sitting)

Inhale, stretch your arms out in front of you. Fold your hands and interlace your fingers, then exhale and stretch your arms up overhead. Keeping your fingers interlaced, reverse your hands, so your palms are facing up. Arch your back, press your rib cage out and your buttocks forward, tighten your belly, straighten out your legs and point your toes. Feel the shins stretch as the toes point. Look up and back. Take three deep breaths with your mouth closed. Then inhale and release the whole stretch on an exhale. Repeat.

SEATED BACK STRETCH

(stretches the back of your body)

Grab your knees with your hands. On an exhalation, pull against your knees with your hands, curl forward, rounding your spine and pushing your back into the back of your seat (make sure the seat-back tray in front of you is up). Drop your head forward and press your chin into your chest. Pull your shoulders up around your ears and round them forward, tighten the belly, pull your heels back toward the bottom of your seat and lift your toes. Feel the stretch all the way from your shoulders to your feet. Repeat.

SEATED SPINAL TWIST

(stretches and strengthens sides of body)

Put your right ankle on your left knee in a cross-legged position. Inhale deeply and grab your right knee with your left hand. Lean forward slightly and take hold of the arm rest to your right with your right hand, then exhale deeply and twist as far as you can to the right. Inhale again and as you exhale, pull with your left hand and reach your right arm up in the air. Push your right shoulder back, and look back over your right shoulder. Pull your belly in and take three big conscious breaths with your mouth closed. Repeat.

SOURCE: NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE

Business travelers embrace yoga

When the world of the business traveler turns upside down — whether because of a missed connecting flight, lost luggage or an uncooperative volcano — Steve Boerema knows just what to do.

He finds a convenient corner in the airport and stands on his head.

Boerema, who is 45 and lives in St Augustine Beach, Florida, travels an average of 150 days a year, most of them overseas, as a consultant to the yachting industry. He has also been practicing yoga daily for four years. That practice has now become as essential a part of his business travel as his frequent-flier mileage.

"Initially, it helped me dealing with homesickness and melancholy," said Boerema, who is married with two teenage children. "All of us on the road suffer some sort of guilt, being away from our families. Yoga really calmed my head, helped keep me from thinking about things I had no control of."

Several million Americans practice

Practitioners tout the stress-busting and mind-clearing benefits of doing yoga on the move

BY JOHN HANC

NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE, NEW YORK

yoga at least once a week, according to surveys by the sporting goods industry. Many are college-educated professionals in their 30s and 40s, demographics that match those of business travelers, so it is logical that they would adapt their practice to their life in transit.

There is even an app for it: *Yoga Journal* magazine's iPractice 2.0, a mobile yoga class for iPhone and iPod Touch. "I knew I had to find something to keep me centered," says Sarah Howell, a 29-year-old sales trainer for a software company based in Austin, Texas. She started traveling for work three years ago and is now on the road two to three days a week, most months of the year.

Howell, who writes a business travel blog called the Road Warriorette

(roadwarriorette.com), describes herself as "a better person and certainly a better employee," when she practices yoga while on her business trips. "I'm better able to focus on the task at hand," she said.

"Research has shown that those who practice yoga and Pilates have improved sleep quality," said Michele Olson, an exercise physiologist at Auburn University-Montgomery in Alabama. "That's a big plus for travelers."

"If you're sitting for hours on a plane, your hip flexors and hamstrings and other muscles shorten, and we know that can lead to back problems," Olson says. "Yoga, because it involves a lot of moves and positions that lengthen those muscles, can be very beneficial in com-

bating joint stiffness at the hip joint and preventing back problems."

Christopher Berger, an exercise physiologist at the University of Pittsburgh, is leading a task force for the American College of Sports Medicine called "Exercise Is Medicine on the Fly," designed to promote physical activity among travelers and airport employees.

"Since 9/11, we have very long lines, unpredictable searches and more demands on people," he said. "There's certainly psychological stress associated with that. One of our goals for this task force is to get people to use airports as places to blow off that steam."

Some major American airports do seem to be trying to offer passengers more opportunities to get blood flowing instead of boiling. Detroit Metropolitan Airport, for example, has a marked 1.6km walking trail on the airport grounds, and so-called Reflection Rooms in each of its two main terminals where yoga and meditation can be comfortably practiced.



PHOTOS: AGENCIES



PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

Lack of iPad-specific apps hampers travel planning

BY TAMARA LUSH
AP, ST PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

As a new iPad owner, many of my iPad fantasies involved using the device for entertainment while traveling.

I could see the iPad on an airplane tray table feeding me movies, books and music. I imagined the iPad in Rome, offering me tidbits of Vatican history as I sipped espresso. Downloaded games would squash my boredom while waiting at the Miami airport. In Las Vegas, it could suggest where to eat during a convention.

But I had not thought much about using the iPad as a travel-planning tool until I sat down to book a vacation to Italy.

Instead of using a laptop to buy tickets, I decided to try doing it on the iPad. My goal was to find the cheapest tickets from Tampa or Orlando, Florida, to Rome, for September, and to look at hotel

options, car rentals and a guidebook. I decided to download some apps to try, all free except for the guidebook.

I could have done my booking and searching without downloading apps, by connecting directly to travel Web sites using the iPad's Internet connection. But while some Web sites look virtually identical on the iPad compared to a conventional computer screen, other sites do not display as well on the iPad. Naturally, apps designed specifically for the device format better, are easier to use, and take advantage of certain features.

Unfortunately, at the time I was planning my trip, many of the big travel sites like Expedia and Travelocity had not yet developed apps specifically for the iPad. As a substitute, I tried using iPhone apps for those sites.

The results were disappointing. Using iPhone apps for Expedia

and Travelocity did not display the content at full-screen size, and magnifying it resulted in slightly fuzzy text. Navigating to screens where I could enter my destination, search for airfares and buy tickets was confusing. At one point, the Expedia app offered a phone number for assistance; when I called, I was told to book the trip through the Web site.

In contrast, an app for Kayak specifically created for the iPad was a joy to use, easy to view and intuitive. As with most flight-booking Web sites, I was directed immediately to type in airport names and dates and other basic choices. Other details that popped up in boxes on the screen included a map, hotel prices, my search history and "Hot searches from Tampa" with other trips being looked at in my area. I eventually booked a US\$714 one-stop round-trip to Rome on Delta.

Many hotel apps — Hilton, HotelsNearMe, HotelPal, HotelsByMe — created for the iPhone work fine on the iPad. They are excellent for on-the-go travelers who want to book a room that night. All have a cool function that asks whether to use the current iPad location to find hotel rooms nearby; they instantly display price and whether there are vacancies on helpful maps. Future hotel reservations also are possible, and again, the interactive map features are wonderful.

Almost all the car rental apps I tried were excellent, too, even though they were apps for iPhone, not iPad. The Hertz, Budget and carrentals.com iPhone apps were easy to search with and user-friendly, displaying photos of cars and prices in both euros and US dollars.

At the time I researched my trip, there was little content from traditional travel guidebook

publishers designed for iPads. But I did look at a version of Lonely Planet's *1,000 Ultimate Experiences* created for the iPad. The *1,000* book is not a regular destination guide; rather it is a compendium of places and things for travelers to see and do. While some online commentaries have criticized it for being light on content, I found it to be a fun, gorgeous and inspiring application.

The iPad version also has advantages over a bound book, offering web links and videos. Swiping and flicking through the virtual playing card-deck of locations, I found several Italy-related activities, including a Vespa ride through Rome. Lonely Planet plans to release entire guidebooks for download on the iPad, and I hope there will be a dedicated destination guide to Italy before I leave so I can use it on my iPad, on the plane.