



BESPOKE PHYSIQUE

THE FIELD GUIDE

The Travel-Week Protocol.

How to train, eat and measure properly through a week on the road — planned before you leave the house, the same way you'd plan anything else that matters.

WHY THIS EXISTS

You already know how to do this.

You would not walk into a pitch for a major client and wing it. You'd know the room, the agenda, the objection that always comes — and how slide three answers it before anyone has to ask. You have run that preparation so many times it stopped feeling like work. It's second nature.

You have never once pointed that skill at a travel week.

That is the whole problem, and it is not the problem most men think they have. They think the road exposes a discipline failure. It doesn't. Most men don't lose their physique traveling because they stopped caring — they lose it because they packed a different plan for the road, a worse one, and **a worse plan run perfectly still loses.**

The half hour on the elliptical you promised yourself and didn't do. Not because you're weak — because at nine at night, tired, you couldn't say what it would actually get you. **A man who won't spend energy on an undefined return is exercising judgment.** The failure isn't his; nobody defined the return. Same with the "I'll eat light and get back on track Monday." None of it is weakness. It is the predictable result of treating a travel week as an exception to be survived instead of a normal week to be executed.

The whole method, in one sentence.

You don't need a travel version of your plan. You need your plan, in a different city.

Everything in this guide is one move applied four ways: the road is a planning problem, and planning is the thing you are already better at than almost anyone you know. The gym is chosen before you fly. The dinner is chosen before you land. The protein is in the bag before you leave the house. The room is prepared for before you check into it.

I'll be honest about the cost. The first two or three trips, this feels like work. Then it becomes what packing became: a sequence you run without deliberating, in a few minutes, without it occupying any part of your attention. It is no different from packing a bag — and nobody finds packing a bag hard.

What you get at the end of it isn't a physique thing. It's the difference between being genuinely upset that the plans have changed, and adapting as though nothing happened. Flights get canceled. Dinners move. You will be in an airport hotel at midnight at some point this year. The man with a plan and a contingency is inconvenienced. The man without one is derailed.

Walk the entire trip, at home, in advance.

First, an honest word on frequency. Most men reading this are away one week in three, or in one city a week. That is entirely workable, and everything here is built for it.

A genuine three-city week — six or seven legs, a different bed every night — is a different animal, and I have done enough of them to say it plainly: the hours are not there. You can hold ground with what follows. You will not make progress, and it would be a lie to tell you otherwise.

If that is your normal, you have made a trade — income now against health later. Bankers make it deliberately and some of them are right. It is a legitimate decision and it is yours to make. It is only worth making on purpose, rather than finding out in five years that you made it by default.

Before I leave the house, I walk through the whole trip in my head and answer a fixed set of questions. It takes a few minutes. It is the single highest-leverage thing in this document, and it costs nothing but attention paid early instead of late.

The questions, every trip

- **When do I land?** Not when does the flight depart — when am I actually in a car, and what is open at that hour.
- **What is around the hotel?** Within walking distance and within a short ride. You are looking for one real gym and one real grocery store.
- **Which grocery store is on the way, and what time does it close?** The one on the route from the airport, not the one that's closest to the hotel. You will not go back out.
- **What's in the airport I'm landing at?** Specifically: where is the protein.
- **What could I grab on the way out if I go straight to the room?** The version of the night where you land late and everything is shut.
- **What's the play if I'm delayed?** Ask it about every leg, including the way home.

That last question is the one most people skip, and it is the one that pays. **If my evening flight home is delayed or canceled, what's the play? If I'm on the first bird out at 5:15 and that means getting up at three, what am I eating?** You are not predicting the future. You are deciding, once, while you're calm and at home, what you'd do — so that when it happens you are executing rather than improvising at the worst possible moment.

Do it for each day of the trip, and do it for the return. The return is where most plans quietly fall apart, because by then you're tired and you've stopped thinking about it.

Back the day out from the plate.

Most men eat their way through a travel day and then meet dinner as a problem. Do it the other way round. Dinner is the meal you control least, so make it the fixed point and compute everything else backwards from it.

If I know where we're eating, I read the menu before I travel and decide the plate. Then the rest of the day is built to fit around it — what breakfast needs to be, whether lunch is a real meal or a shake, how much protein has to come from the bag. If it's between two places, I read both menus and hold a plan for each.

A restaurant menu is not a surprise. It's published. The steakhouse has tonight the same cuts it had last week. The plan is available to you in advance, if you treat the menu as data rather than as temptation.

The first time, this takes real minutes. After a while you know exactly what you're looking for and it takes ten or fifteen seconds to scan a menu and make the call.

Write it down. Mine goes in Apple Notes on my phone, one entry per day of the trip, and I read it right before I walk in. Deciding in daylight with a clear head and then reading your own decision at the door is a completely different act from deciding at the table, hungry, with a waiter standing there.

The three ordering rules that travel anywhere.

- **Protein is the anchor.** Decide it first and build the rest of the plate around hitting the number. Most restaurant failures are protein-light and carb-and-fat-heavy by default.
- **Eat the food you actually like.** The steakhouse, the sushi counter, the good Italian. Serious kitchens assume restrained preparation, not butter-drenched everything. Order it that way and the math is friendlier than you would guess.
- **Count the drink or skip the drink — never ignore the drink.** Alcohol is the quiet displacer. It's calories that push protein off the plate and it costs you the next morning's recovery. On a focused block the honest move is usually to skip it.

A real gym, on a day pass.

The highest-leverage decision of a travel week is made before you leave: you are training in a real gym, not the hotel fitness center. Six pairs of dumbbells that stop at 50 and a single cable stack is not where a serious session happens.

Nearly every city has a real gym that sells a day pass — the commercial chains, the hardcore independents, the hotel that partners with a proper facility down the block. It costs less than the club sandwich you'll order later. Book it when you book the flight, not from the lobby at six in the morning.

The constraint is hours, not distance

Men assume the problem is that there's nothing near the hotel. In practice that is almost never the problem — a car is a rounding error against the cost of a business trip, and someone else is usually paying for it anyway. **The real question is whether the gym is open when you need it to be**, and that turns out to be a very wide window. Most markets have something opening at five and something closing at ten. In years of doing this, the times a genuine option didn't exist have been rare enough to count.

Where to look

- **TrainAway** — purpose-built for exactly this: gym day passes, bought in advance, in most major cities.
- **Wellhub** (formerly Gympass) and **ClassPass** — broader networks, worth checking if you're in one already.
- **Ask the hotel which facility they partner with.** A surprising number have an arrangement with a real gym nearby and never mention it unless asked.
- **Search the chain you already belong to.** Many national memberships include reciprocal access you have never used.

What it actually costs

I hold two memberships — Gold's Gym and EOS — and between them there is usually one within reach of wherever I'm staying. That is the cheap version of this: rather than buying access trip by trip, hold coverage.

When neither is there, a day pass has run me somewhere between \$25 and \$50. The only time I've paid \$50 is Life Time, and it's the one time I don't mind — they bill themselves as an athletic country club and the name holds up. Uncrowded, fastidiously clean, top-of-the-line equipment in excellent repair. If that's the option in front of you, take it and don't think about it again.

The gate is sleep, not access. If getting to the gym means less than six hours of sleep, I don't train. That is not a concession — it's the correct call, and the week is elastic enough to absorb it. Start the training week on Sunday instead of Monday, or let it run to Saturday instead of ending Friday. The session moves. It doesn't disappear.

The same session, on different iron.

You are not designing a new workout for the road. You run the block you're already in, on whatever that city's gym has. The only thing that changes is the arithmetic — a bar that weighs 45 in one gym and 55 in another, a machine that loads differently. That's a plate-math problem, not a programming problem.

Keep the movement pattern. Keep the target effort. Adjust the number to the iron in front of you. And substitute by pattern, never by mood — the question is always *what job was that movement doing*, not *what do I feel like instead*.

IF IT ISN'T THERE	SAME JOB
Leg press	Hack squat, Smith squat, or Bulgarian split squat
Barbell back squat	Smith squat, hack squat, dumbbell front or goblet squat
Lying leg curl	Dumbbell Romanian deadlift, single-leg RDL, Nordic curl
Barbell RDL	Dumbbell RDL — the pattern survives the load drop better than most
Pec deck	Dumbbell fly, cable fly, incline dumbbell press
Seated cable row	One-arm dumbbell row, chest-supported dumbbell row
Lat pulldown	Assisted or bodyweight pull-up, dumbbell pullover
Preacher curl	Incline dumbbell curl — arm behind the torso, deeper stretch
Triceps pushdown	Overhead dumbbell extension, dumbbell skullcrusher
Seated calf raise	Standing calf raise with the toes elevated
Hip thrust machine	Dumbbell hip thrust off a bench

Where two options are listed, the first is the closer match. If the gym has neither, work down the list rather than abandoning the slot.

The hotel gym, run properly.

One-night stop, five o'clock departure, nothing open in the window you have. It happens. The hotel gym is not a consolation prize if you use it for what it's actually good at.

With dumbbells capped at 50 you cannot overload a strong man through a full range of motion. What you *can* do is load the muscle where it is long — and the evidence is that training in the lengthened position produces adaptations at least as good as full range. That is the entire argument, and it's enough: with the load capped, position and effort are the levers you still control.

Three levers, both sessions

- **Go unilateral.** One leg or one arm at a time turns a 50 into a meaningful load again.
- **Choose the deepest loaded stretch.** Incline over flat, split squat over squat, overhead over pushdown.
- **Slow the eccentric and take it close to failure.** The weight is capped, so effort and time under tension do the work. Rest 45 to 60 seconds.

LOWER

SETS × REPS

Bulgarian split squat — the anchor	3 × 10–12 per leg
Dumbbell Romanian deadlift	3 × 10–12
Single-leg RDL	2 × 10 per leg
Goblet squat , paused at the bottom	2 × 15–20
Calf raise , toes elevated	3 × 15–20

UPPER

SETS × REPS

Incline dumbbell press	3 × 10–12
One-arm dumbbell row	3 × 10–12 per side
Dumbbell overhead press	3 × 10–12
Incline dumbbell curl	2 × 12–15
Overhead dumbbell extension	2 × 12–15
Lateral raise	2 × 15–20

If you suspect you're getting ill, none of this applies. Go to bed, get properly hydrated, eat a real meal. And occasionally the best-laid plan falls apart anyway — a canceled flight, a dinner that runs to midnight. That happens rarely, and it is not evidence the practice doesn't work.

The number nobody checks.

Start with the target. I aim for about 0.85 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight. For most men reading this, carrying somewhere in the region of 18 to 20 percent body fat, that lands here:

BODYWEIGHT	DAILY PROTEIN TARGET
180 lb	≈ 153 g
200 lb	≈ 170 g
220 lb	≈ 187 g

Now the part that surprises everyone, including men who have been tracking for years.

Restaurant menus list steak weight raw. Cooked beef retains roughly 75 percent of its raw weight. So the eight-ounce filet you ordered arrives on the plate as about six ounces of cooked beef — and cooked beef tenderloin runs about 22.5 grams of protein per three ounces.

An 8 oz filet on the menu is about 45 g of protein on the plate. Not the 55 or 60 you'd get by multiplying eight ounces by a rule of thumb.

A 6 oz fish is roughly 35 g. Fish portioning is less standardized than steak — some kitchens weigh the raw fillet, some plate a cooked portion — so treat that one as the softer number.

Put that against the table above. A 200-pound man is chasing 170 grams. The steakhouse dinner — the biggest, most protein-forward meal of his day, the one he assumes has it handled — delivers about a quarter of his target.

Ordering well is not the skill. Ordering well gets you a quarter of the way there. The rest is logistics, and that is what the next page is about.

Two moves at the table, and a bag that does the rest.

At the table

- **Shrimp cocktail as a starter.** High protein, almost no fat, on nearly every menu of this kind. It is the cleanest addition available to you.
- **Ask for a double portion of the fish, and pay for it.** Or rather — let the expense line pay for it. The upcharge is trivial against the trip and it closes most of the gap in one decision.

What travels in the bag

The reason dinner stops being make-or-break is that not all of the day's protein has to come from a meal. Get that idea and the pressure comes off the entire trip.

- **David bars.** 28 g of protein in 150 calories. Soft enough that they won't pull your dental work out, and they taste good. I always pack a handful. They're options.
- **Fairlife Core Power Elite.** 42 g in a 14 oz bottle, and now almost universally available in airports and convenience stores. At this point there is really no excuse.
- **A battery-powered blender bottle,** and servings of protein powder pre-measured into small screw-top containers — not fiddly zip-lock bags that leak in a suitcase.
- **The grocery stop.** Swing past on the way to the hotel for a gallon of water and a shelf-stable carton of unsweetened almond milk. That plus the bottle and you're set for the week.
- **Pre-packaged boiled eggs,** which most convenience stores now carry.

The Chick-fil-A order worth memorizing. A small mac & cheese, a 12-count of grilled nuggets, and a Zesty Buffalo sauce packet — mix the chicken and the sauce straight into the mac. Roughly 50 g of protein for about 495 calories.

Don't weigh yourself on the road.

This is the one piece of advice here that contradicts what nearly everyone else will tell you, including an earlier version of this guide. Weigh at home, on your scale, in your series. On the road, leave it alone.

The usual argument for weighing through a travel week is that the number is noisy — restaurant sodium, a red-eye, a disrupted schedule — so you smooth it with a rolling average. That argument is true as far as it goes, and it is not the real problem.

The real problem is that a hotel scale is a different instrument. It is not calibrated to yours, and it does not have to be wrong in an interesting way to be useless — it just has to be different. Five pounds is common. And you do not put readings from two instruments into the same series and then draw a line through them. You would not accept that from a report on your desk, and you should not accept it from your own body.

When I'm on a cutting block I'll frequently go five days without stepping on a scale, come home, weigh in on my own, and be lighter than when I left. There is no trick in that. The plan was running the whole time; I simply wasn't measuring with the wrong tool.

If you're new to this, that will sound like faith rather than method, and I understand why. It stops sounding like faith the first time you watch it happen. **If you ran the plan, coming home holds no surprises.**

Which is the exact inverse of the man stepping off a ten-day cruise, having eaten the buffet every night for a week, onto his own bathroom scale — genuinely startled by a number that anyone could have predicted for him on day two. That surprise is not caused by the scale. It's caused by not having had a plan to run.

A hotel room is an adversarial environment.

Not a neutral one. It is full of bright LEDs that nobody at the front desk believes exist, corridors of people behaving as though it's noon, and air handling designed by someone who has never tried to sleep in it. You would not walk into a hostile negotiation unprepared. Same principle, lower stakes, higher frequency.

What I bring, every trip

- **An eye mask.** Hotel rooms are lit like small airports — a router, a smoke detector, a television that never fully sleeps, a gap in the curtain that no arrangement of furniture will close.
- **Earplugs, tested at home first.** Comfort matters more than rating, and the road is the wrong place to discover a pair you can't stand wearing. Try them in your own bed before you pack them.
- **A white-noise app on the phone.** In an airport hotel where people come and go at all hours, turn it up further than feels reasonable. The brain paints it out within a couple of minutes and you drift off underneath it.
- **The air conditioning on continuous, at its highest fan setting.** Cooler is better for sleep anyway, and it doubles as a second source of steady noise.

I have salvaged nights I had no business salvaging with nothing more than that list. But it only works if the things are with you, and I learned that the hard way more than once. They live in the bag permanently now, the same way a charger does.

All of which serves one decision, made the next morning: **under six hours, I don't train.** Protecting the window is what keeps that from being a frequent decision.

And if you're routinely facing nights like that, it's a conversation worth having with your physician *before* the trip — not something to solve at three in the morning on your own.

The end of the day

There is a version of this guide that reads as deprivation, and it would be a poor guide. So here is what the end of a well-run travel day actually looks like.

I plan a piece of chocolate. Tiny Tony's — individually wrapped, assorted, fifty calories each. I have a sweet tooth and no interest in pretending otherwise. Knowing a good piece of chocolate is waiting at the end of the meal is the cherry on top, and because it was in the plan from the start I never have to decide anything about it. **A treat inside the plan costs you nothing. A treat outside the plan costs you the plan.**

Then a hot shower. Supplements. Into bed clean, in a dark and quiet room, the day's work done and tomorrow already decided. Life really couldn't be better.

The Travel-Week Checklist.

Screenshot this page. It's the whole protocol on one screen.

Before you leave the house

- Walk the whole trip — landing times, what's open, the grocery store on the route and when it closes.
- Book a real gym on a day pass. Check its hours against the window you'll actually have.
- Read the menus for the dinners you know about. Decide the plate. Write it in your phone.
- Ask the contingency question for every leg, including home: *if this goes wrong, what's the play?*
- Pack the protein, the blender bottle, the eye mask and the earplugs.

Each training day

- Run the session your block calls for — same muscles, same effort target.
- Substitute by pattern, not by mood. Adjust plate math to the local iron.
- Under six hours of sleep, don't train. Move the session; the week is elastic.

Each meal

- Protein first, and remember the plate carries less than it looks like — an 8 oz filet is about 45 g.
- Shrimp cocktail to start; ask for the double portion of fish.
- Close the rest from the bag. Not all of it has to come from a meal.
- Count the drink or skip the drink. On a focused block, usually skip it.

Each morning

- Don't weigh. It's a different instrument and it doesn't belong in your series.
- Weigh at home, on your own scale, when you're back.

NO AFFILIATIONS

Nobody paid for a mention in this guide.

I have no commercial relationship with any product, company or facility named here. No affiliate links, no sponsorship, no arrangement of any kind. If that ever changes, it will be stated in large type at the top of this page.

What I do have is a suitcase. Everything named here is something I buy with my own money, pack, and eat on my own trips. They're in this guide because they work, and for no other reason.

WHEN THE CHECKLIST ISN'T ENOUGH

This is the manual version.

Everything above, I now run inside a platform I built. It duplicates a training week for travel in one tap, holds the menus of the restaurants you actually eat at with the macros already worked out, does the plate math for whatever gym you walk into, and reads your weight on the trend rather than the morning. The same system on your phone, your watch, and the web.

It's in founding beta. If you run your business on data and have been meaning to run your body the same way, come and look at it.

See the instrument

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