

# ACTIVE VACATIONS

Read the article. Some sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-H the one which fits each gap. There is one extra sentence.



## Physically Active Vacations: Why They Are Good for You

In the autumn of 2009 my wife Daun and I went on a cycling trip through the Rocky Mountains. We had been invited to a wedding in Canmore, Alberta one weekend, and another in Chase, British Columbia the following weekend. The two cities are roughly 300 miles apart, and since we had a full week to make the trip, we decided to do it on our bikes. (1) Canmore is about one mile above sea level, while Chase is less than a quarter-mile above sea level, and we had plenty of time, so we were able to take our time and enjoy our ride.

People often talk about how difficult it is to maintain a healthy lifestyle while on vacation. (2) It's fun for a day or two, but you wind up feeling awful and need a vacation to detoxify from your vacation. So I started to question why, out of all the things one could choose to do for a vacation, people would choose to put themselves in an environment where they will have no choice but to eat unhealthy food and perform very little physical activity - two things that are almost guaranteed to make them feel awful.

I thought a lot about this issue on my trip and I realised that instead of taking vacations that pigeon-hole us into unhealthy behaviours, we would all be better off taking vacations that force us to engage in healthy behaviours. Things like hiking, skiing, cycling and canoeing are not only healthy, but they're cheap! (3) We took our first cycling vacation in 2008, when we set up shop in a small Bed and Breakfast in Picton, Ontario. Each day we would do a different short ride from

our B&B. It cost us almost nothing, and it was literally the best vacation I've ever had. And after a few days of exercising and eating well, we came home feeling completely re-energised.

Not surprisingly, limited evidence supports the idea that healthy vacations leave you feeling better than those characterized by gluttony and sloth. For example, Gerhard Strauss-Blasche and colleagues examined the links between vacation environment and recuperation in a study published in the *Journal of Travel Medicine*. (4) Post-vacation recuperation was assessed by quantifying how closely subjects agreed with the statement. "In comparison to the two weeks before vacation, I now feel mentally fitter, feel more balanced and relaxed, can concentrate better during work, feel physically fitter, do my work more easily, am in a better mood and feel more recuperated."

So what did the authors find? Physical activity during the trip was positively associated with post-vacation recuperation scores. (5) In fact, healthy behaviours including physical activity and adequate sleep accounted for seven per cent of the post-vacation recuperation.

(6) In fact, I wouldn't take this study too seriously. But I don't think it's surprising that people who engage in healthy behaviours during a vacation might feel better upon their return. So instead of looking at your vacation as a potential stumbling block to your healthy lifestyle, why not look at it as a chance to improve your healthy behaviors?

A The study included 191 German males and females, who filled out questionnaires within two weeks of returning from a short vacation.

B A cruise ship is the perfect example - too much food and too little exercise.

C Not surprisingly, there figures have resulted in a huge change in attitudes.

D Cross the Rockies on a bike sounds pretty intense, and it certainly wasn't easy, but luckily most of the trip was downhill.

E In other words, the more physically active people were during their vacation, the more likely they were to feel recuperated upon their return.

F Now of course this is only one study, and it only used questionnaire data, which is less than ideal.

G That's why Daun and I first started taking cycling vacations - we couldn't afford to do much else!