



## Part VII: Travel Day

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Travel day! You've found your next destination, culled through tens of potential assignments, agreed to a contract with your recruiter, and now it's time to begin your planning to spend the next 13 weeks or more in your new 'home'. Seasoned travelers have found just about every trick there is, and have made their traveling lifestyles into rewarding careers. For first-time travelers, however, this can be a nerve-racking part of your new adventures. In this article in the "Getting the Most From Your Rehab Therapy Travel Career" series, we'll help you by sharing some of the best road-tested tips, tricks, and resources we could find.

Quite different from your average vacation, a travel assignment lasting 13 weeks or more introduces many new challenges for the rehab therapy traveler. Of course you have to pack, but can you really pack light for 13 weeks? What should you leave at home? How can you prepare in advance to carry on a normal life for an extended period of time away from wherever you call home? We'll address these and many more questions so let's get started.

### Planning

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To get your assignment started on the right foot, it's important that you have a plan. Start with a list of all the major components of your assignment. Break your overall plan into categories and address them one at a time. For example, on your assignment you'll need to:

- **Pack** - develop a system to pack what you need & leave room to bring some new things home
- **Travel** - arrangements to and from your assignment and in between your shifts
- **Sleep** - move in & out dates & procedures, utilities, contact info emergency numbers, etc.
- **Work** - map the location, determine travel time, your shifts, supervisor names, & contact information.
- **Eat & Play** - find the nearest supermarkets and restaurants you'd like to try before you leave.
- **Stay Close to Home** - Take care of the things that you can't ignore for 13 weeks - family, finances, pets, etc.

Let's go through each one, and we'll share a few tips our travelers have picked up over the years.

### Pack

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Of course your destination is going to determine whether you'll be getting by in a swimsuit and flip flops or if you'll need more weather-resilient clothing, but it's important to have a strategy for what you'll pack. Make a list and follow some simple guidelines.

1. Plan what you would pack for a three-week trip. Pack items you can easily mix & match and you'll be surprised how many different outfit's you're prepared with. Three weeks of clothing can easily be spread into 13 weeks if you can find ways to get creative.
2. Take versatile shoes & accessories that you can wear with multiple outfits
3. Pack only travel size toiletries and leave the hangars at home. You'll purchase what you need for the long haul shortly after you arrive.
4. Regardless of the expected weather, plan for cool nights and pack at least one sweater and jacket.

### Travel

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Not only will you need your travel arrangements to and from your destination, but also to and from work and any other areas you'll want to visit.

1. Have a loose plan. Count on a delay or two - it's part of the traveling lifestyle.
2. Buy a map of the local area or use [Google Maps](#) or [MapQuest](#) and determine two routes to your assignment. Traffic or unexpected construction delays could throw a wrench into your ability to arrive on time.
3. Highlight local supermarkets, banks, pharmacies, barber shops or salons, and the nearest urgent care facility.
4. Consider purchasing a personal GPS device and pre-program the addresses of these important locations and the address where you will stay before you leave.
5. Get off the highway and explore the country roads.

### Sleep

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Everything else about your assignment can be perfect, but if the details of your housing arrangements go unchecked, even the most experienced rehab therapy traveler will be missing home in no time. Make sure you've documented your move-in and move-out dates and procedures. Also be sure you have saved your company's housing coordinator information in your cell will be turned on and off, and make sure you have



phone numbers for after-hours support. Know when the utilities complete contact information for the property manager during and after-hours. Keep this information on your computer or mobile device and always bring a printed copy or two.

## Work

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Your first day on your new assignment can be a great experience if you spend the time to plan ahead. Find your facility on the map and get driving directions in advance. Call the local AAA office (even if you're not a member) and try to find out if there are any major construction delays along your route. Save your supervisor's name and contact information into your cell phone and bring a printed copy as well. Finally, document your shifts and pre-program your travel alarm clock with the necessary wake time.

## Eat & Play

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Working as a traveling physical therapist, occupational therapist, or speech language pathologist is a wonderful experience. One of the most rewarding aspects can be taking in all of the culinary delights of your travels. Visit the various city guide websites such as Citysearch.com or simply Google the city you're traveling to and read local reviews of area restaurants, must see landmarks, and other destinations. plan to get out during your off time and explore local art fairs, parks, sporting, and other recreational events. There's no better way to learn about a city than to enjoy its cuisine and take in local events.

## Stay Close to Home

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The fact that you're traveling on assignment doesn't mean your life at home comes to a complete halt. Make sure your family has your contact information of your mobile, work, and your housing facility. If you're traveling with a friend or co-worker, make sure your family has their contact information as well in case of an emergency. Set yourself up with online banking and schedule as many bill payments as you can in advance so nothing gets missed when you're on the road. This can also be an excellent time to schedule outside home repairs. Leave your trusted repairman with a list when you leave, and everything can be taken care of when

you return. Just make sure you're in agreement that all work will be inspected before the bill is paid. Are you traveling with a pet? Don't forget all of the things they will need as well. Make sure your pet has a good collar and a secure tag, and you might even consider a lost pet recovery service just in case.

Most importantly, try not to change your routine too much. Bring your favorite books with you, and if your kids are used to you reading a bedtime story for them, do it over the phone, or even better, on a webcam.

Just like life at home, your travel assignment can be easier and much more enjoyable with a well thought-out plan. Start this process in advance and talk with another experienced traveler. If you don't know any other rehab therapy travelers, just give us a call at 866-518-1750 and we'll connect you with one of our travelers who would be happy to share their experiences.

## About Cirrus Allied

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Cirrus Allied, LLC, formerly MDI Medical, is one of the nation's leading rehabilitation therapy staffing firms. With offices in Atlanta, Charlotte and Houston, our firm specializes in placing rehabilitation therapists and assistants into travel, contract and permanent employment. For our clients, our focus is providing a one-stop solution to their staffing and HR needs. Cirrus Allied has earned the Joint Commission's gold seal of approval.

Cirrus Allied is a member of the Cirrus Healthcare Group, an international healthcare group specializing in providing US healthcare companies with customized domestic and international staffing and HR solutions. The Group consists of [Cirrus Medical Staffing](#), [Cirrus Allied](#) and [Medtivia](#). Cirrus Medical Staffing provides national travel and permanent placement for Nurses, Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants; is ranked as one of the top 10 travel nurse companies in the US; and is Joint Commission Certified. In addition, the Cirrus companies provide international Therapist and Nurse staffing augmentation through our recruitment organization, Medtivia, located in the Philippines. Medtivia is continuously ranked as one of the most outstanding international nurse and therapist recruitment organizations. The companies are all [A. Soriano Corporation](#) (ANSCOR) companies.



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