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15 Successful Packing Tips

By Joyce Moseley Pierce

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15 Tips for Successful Packing
by: Joyce Moseley Pierce
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Whether you travel for business or pleasure, frequently or only occasionally, it seems that we basically pack the same things every time. Here are a few tips to help simplify the process so you don't have to stress about it every time. Remember that most of these items can be purchased when you get there, but you don't want to spend your vacation money on things you already have at home, and if you're traveling on business, you may not have time to run to the store for something you need at an 8 am meeting.

After reading through these ideas, you might want to make an itemized list of things you consider important to take. Keep it in your suitcase so it will be available next time you pack and use it as a checklist to make sure you haven't forgotten anything. If other things come to mind while you're traveling, update your list for next time, but be sure to return it to your suitcase.

15 Successful Packing Tips

Rule #1 for me is to keep it light. I traveled to Brazil for 10 days with only a carry-on rolling bag and backpack. My husband packed a rolling bag that was big enough to stuff a body into and it was difficult to manage when we stayed in hotels that didn't have elevators. I don't pack more than I can carry by myself and I try to leave a little room for those vacation purchases. I have a nylon carry-on bag that zips up into a small square that comes in handy for carrying things home if I get too carried away.

1. Pajamas or gown. I have a pair of pjs I keep in my suitcase just so I don't forget them. The reason I take

pajamas instead of a gown is that hotels are usually cold and if I'm staying with friends or family, I want to be able to get up and use the bathroom without having to have a robe.

2. Underwear. Pack a pair for every day and then include extras. If you're going to be doing activities that require showering and changing clothes during the day, be sure to include enough for that. Don't forget bras and sports bras.

3. Make up and toiletries. Instead of having to remember what to take every time, go through your beauty routine at home and set out the things you use every day. Refill sample jars from trial offers, or buy travel-size containers to pack your cleansers so you don't have to pack an 8 oz. tub of cold cream. Don't forget deodorant and shaving supplies. I keep a razor in my bag all the time and just change the blade when I'm leaving again. Keep your toiletry bag stocked and leave it in your suitcase for the next trip, but be sure to check and make sure you don't need to refill any of the containers.

4. Tooth care. Instead of buying a travel size tube of toothpaste, when I get toward the bottom of my big tube, I stop using it and throw it into my toiletry bag. I also pack the floss and toothbrush the dentist gives me.

5. Feminine products. Don't forget to pack at least enough to get you by until you can get to the store. A urologist once told me that women seem prone to bladder infections while they're on vacation. If you are, you might want to pack an OTC medication that will help relieve

the pain and lessen the symptoms until you can get to a doctor.

6. Medications. I have a separated pill box that holds pills for a week. Usually my trips are not that long (unfortunately!) so I'll put in what I need for each day and use the extra slots for aspirin or other things I might need while away. I have another pill box that I use for my vitamins.

7. Clothes. After considering what the weather will be, I pull clothes out and lay them on the bed. I like dark colors because those spills aren't quite so obvious as they are on light colors! I pack pants that will be interchangeable with more than one shirt. In trying to pack light, I may wear a pair of black pants more than once, but not my shirts! If you're going to a cool climate,

remember to bring things to layer. It will take up less room than bulkier items. It doesn't hurt to try things on before you go, either! If you haven't worn something in awhile, it may not fit the way you remembered.

8. Accessories. Make sure you have belts if necessary. You should only need one belt if you've packed color coordinated items. Keep jewelry to a minimum.

9. Shoes. Be sure your shoes are comfortable! Don't go buy a new pair of shoes and try to break them in away from home. I plan my wardrobe so that I only need one or two pair of shoes. I've cut heels out of my wardrobe, and flats go great with long skirts or pants. If you're packing shorts, take a comfortable pair of sandals that will work with shorts or skirts. If I'm taking tennis shoes, I try to wear them on the plane because they take up too much room in the suitcase. If you're going on a business trip, be sure to polish your shoes before you pack them, and then slip them inside a plastic grocery bag so the polish doesn't rub off on your clothes. Don't forget to take socks or nylons that will fit with the shoes you've chosen to take.

10. Vacation gear. Don't forget your swimsuit, cover-up and a pair of flip-flops (we used to call them 'thongs' but now that has an entirely different meaning!). My husband always forgets swim trunks and I accuse him of just wanting to buy

a new pair in every city!

11. Hair products. I have short hair that can easily air dry on its own in the summer, but I have a travel hair dryer I carry with me if I'm staying in a hotel that doesn't provide one in the room. I have a hair brush that always stays in my bag. Condense big bottles of shampoo and conditioner into smaller ones. I carry a shampoo/conditioner product with me so I only have to use one product. If you need gel or hair spray, buy travel sizes the first time, and then refill them from your big bottle when it runs out.

12. Electronics. With cell phones and computers, neither are any good to you if the batteries are dead. Be sure to take the cords with you and remember to recharge every night. Don't forget your camera, film and batteries. Take film mailers with you and send it off before you leave to have a head start on the processing, and save on those one hour prices.

13. Backpack. I always carry a backpack for things to entertain myself on the plane or in the car. About a week before I leave home, I pull the backpack out and as I think of

things I want to take, I throw them in and then repack it before I leave. Seems like it's always heavy going to my destination and lighter coming home because I'm tired and pack more of it in the suitcase. If I have a connecting flight and am worried about my suitcase arriving at the same time I do, I include a change of clothes and my toiletry bag. I always carry something to read, my journal, a bottle of water and a snack. I put all travel documents in the outside pocket so they are easily accessible. Do NOT pack your manicure tools or they will be taken away from you.

14. Purse. I don't carry a purse when traveling, so I condense everything into a fanny pack and put anything else I have to have in the backpack. If I'm carrying much cash, I use one of those money pouches that hangs around your neck and can be worn under your shirt. It's a good idea not to carry all of your money in one place.

15. Maps and other. Before I visit a new place, I do some research on the internet and get driving directions from the airport. I pull information on that city that might be of interest to me and my family. Be sure to include a small sewing kit, or at least some safety pins, as well as your

basic first aid supplies.

Each trip I take becomes a challenge to me to pack even better on the next one. I discover what's important to take and what's not. Having your list available as you pack for each trip allows you to pack and feel confident that you haven't forgotten anything. Of course if you are traveling with children, you'll need to take their needs into consideration, and that might include taking in-laws with you to help carry everything!

Joyce Moseley Pierce a freelance riter and owner of Emerson Publications. She is also editor of The Family First Newsletter, an ezine for families with young children. <http://www.emersonpublications.com>

Simple Sealing Solution for Pump Shafts

By Thomas Yoon

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In this issue, we will focus on a much simpler way of sealing a rotating shaft of a pump. It's by using gland packing. This method of sealing has been in use for a very long time, and is still being used today.

There are advantages and disadvantages in using them.

Perhaps the first and foremost reason for replacing them with mechanical seals is because of the fact that gland packing needs a small amount of leak for cooling purposes.

A person who installs a gland packing must ensure that the latter does not grip the shaft too tightly. A little dripping must be allowed for. Pumps that contain hazardous liquids should not use them at all.

Pumps that contain gland packing will usually be constructed with a small well and piping at the gland to lead the leak water away from the pump so as to ensure that the water will not damage the bearings, housing or foundation. This can really mess up the pump area if there is a choke at the drain piping that prevents the leaked water from flowing away.

The pump gland nuts may need to be tightened every now and then due to slight loosening after some time of operation. This is because the nut cannot be tightened hard against the soft packing.

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Because the packing gland rubs against the shaft, it will tend to wear down the shaft. For this reason, and especially for larger pumps using packing glands, there will usually be a shaft sleeve that can be slipped over the shaft. The wear down will then occur only on the shaft sleeve. This can be replaced instead of the more expensive shaft.

Another disadvantage of using packing glands is the fact that there is a certain amount of skill needed for cutting and installing the gland in order for it to work properly. It's more difficult to get consistent results.

Although there are disadvantages in using gland packing, there are also good reasons for using them.

They are less expensive to use compared to mechanical seals. If chosen and installed correctly, they can last for a very long time. When changing packing glands, the pump housing need not be opened up. This can be an advantage when skilled labor is in short supply.

Keeping stock of spares is not a problem because they can be used for all pump brands as long as they have the same gland sizes. Pump packing materials are more robust compared to the fragile and delicate mechanical seals.

For more information on gland packing and pump troubleshooting, download the free software from

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