

Tour Well

promoting positive
mental health and
wellbeing on tour



WHAT IS TOUR WELL?

Tour Well consists of practical, evidence-based tips addressing common mental health and wellbeing challenges that you might encounter while on tour, so you can better prepare, take care of yourself, and help support your mates on tour.

Going on tour is great fun - exploring towns and cities, delivering shows to new audiences, meeting people and making lifelong friends. Living out of a suitcase, being away from your family and friends, and spending hours travelling can take their toll on your mental health.

Tour Well has been designed to help you thrive on tour. Whether you're away for a week, a month or a year, we hope you find Tour Well helpful.

For more information on any of the topics in Tour Well, visit artswellbeingcollective.com.au

IS TOUR WELL FOR ME?

If you're an individual about to head off on tour, yes, Tour Well is definitely for you!

Tour Well is not a comprehensive guide to every issue you might encounter, and it does not take the place of support and information from your Company Management, peak bodies, occupational health and safety practices, legal or medical advice, or your workplace policies and procedures.

Tour Well does not include information about touring logistics, development, or policies and procedures. It is expected that your Producer, Tour Manager, Company Manager or equivalent has provided these details to you, and properly communicated rigorous and relevant policies and procedures to all members of the touring party.

WHO DEVELOPED TOUR WELL?

Tour Well is a resource of the Arts Wellbeing Collective, an Arts Centre Melbourne initiative. The content was created, reviewed and informed by passionate touring professionals from the Arts Wellbeing Collective Advisory Group, Arts on Tour, Entertainment Assist, ILBIJERRI Theatre Company, and Regional Arts Victoria, as well as more than 100 company and crew who shared their challenges and ideas.

Key contributors include:

Arts Centre Melbourne

Australia's largest and busiest performing arts centre, Arts Centre Melbourne's purpose is to enrich the lives of Victorians – culturally, educationally, socially and economically and to provide leadership in the promotion and development of the performing arts (Victorian Arts Centre Act 1979).

The Arts Wellbeing Collective

An initiative of Arts Centre Melbourne, the Arts Wellbeing Collective comprises a consortium of arts and cultural organisations whose shared vision is to effect better mental health and wellbeing for performing arts workers. The Arts Wellbeing Collective offers resources, workshops and sector initiatives, specifically tailored to the unique landscape of the performing arts industry.

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Dr Melissa Ree

Melissa is a clinical psychologist who specialises in the psychological management of adults with sleep difficulties. Melissa worked at the University of Oxford as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Psychiatry. She has worked in private practice since 2004, consulting through Sleep Matters Perth.

Dr Alison Robb

Alison originally trained as a theatre director at the Flinders University Drama Centre and worked in the industry for companies such as State Theatre Company South Australia and Vitalstatistix, as well as in the USA and UK. Alison completed her combined PhD/Master of Clinical Psychology in 2017, and now consults with arts and cultural organisations across Australia.

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We acknowledge the traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet, visit and perform, the People of the Kulin Nations, and pay our respect to their Elders, past, present and future.

PRE-TOUR

COLLABORATE

Our industry is full of unique, passionate people. The success of any tour is dependent on mutual respect for everyone involved, whether they be cast, crew, company, audiences, venue teams, or school groups.

You want you and your touring party to feel as safe as possible on tour, both physically and mentally. Take some time to think about yourself on tour - remembering that the way you work and experience touring might not be the same as everyone else. Try:

- Sharing your story inasmuch as you are comfortable.
- Listen carefully to others.
- Never assume that your way of seeing the world is the only way.
- Identify and communicate your needs consistently and respectfully.

Consider:

- Sensitivities towards community, family, extended family, and kinship systems, and religious and cultural customs.
- Communication style, body language, and language barriers. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification or confirmation, rephrase or repeat questions.
- Perceptions of safety - everyone's sense of safety differs - be conscious of how you and your touring party feel in cities, regional or remote areas, unfamiliar towns, late at night, or areas with non-diverse populations.
- Check in with your tour party to make sure you're using the right form of address, acknowledgement, pronoun and pronunciation for them - and share your preferences too!

Everyone has challenges that you don't know about. If someone seems to be struggling, gentle concern can go a long way.

Touring can be tough - be kind to each other.

CREATIVE IDENTITY

Sometimes 'the tour' becomes the biggest thing in your life, and the show slowly becomes your whole world. That's not unusual - you're doing something you're passionate about, and you've worked really hard to get to this point.

There's nothing wrong with being passionate and committed, but the risk is that 'the tour' starts to become 'WHO you are' not 'WHAT you're doing'.

Before you head off on tour, have a think about all the other threads - outside of the show - that make you YOU.



VALUES

What's most important to you in life?

Connecting with your values can help orient you to goals beyond this current tour. Check out the list below for inspiration, then consider, 'If I had a million dollars and a whole year, how would I live by that value? What about a hundred dollars and a week? Ten dollars and a day? One dollar and a minute?'

It's a matter of choosing a small way of enacting your values in everyday life, so you're living a life in line with what you value, rather than focussing on what you 'should' do.

Accomplishment	Honesty	Persistence
Abundance	Improvement	Pleasure
Authenticity	Independence	Power
Adventure	Individuality	Practicality
Beauty	Innovation	Preservation
Bravery	Integrity	Professionalism
Clarity	Intelligence	Reliability
Collaboration	Intuition	Respect
Compassion	Joy	Responsibility
Community	Justice	Safety
Creativity	Kindness	Security
Curiosity	Knowledge	Simplicity
Determination	Leadership	Sincerity
Fairness	Learning	Solitude
Flexibility	Love	Spirituality
Forgiveness	Loyalty	Stability
Freedom	Moderation	Status
Friendship	Money	Teamwork
Fun	Nature	Tradition
Generosity	Openness	Trust
Genuineness	Optimism	Unity
Gratitude	Peace	Variety
Growth	Perfection	Wealth
Harmony	Perseverance	Wisdom



PLAY

What made 'child you' happy?

We all have a 'happy child' part of ourselves that needs spontaneity and play. What made you happy when you were a child? Maybe a sight, sound, smell, taste, texture, object, even an imaginary world.

What are some of the ways you can incorporate that joy, playfulness and surprise into your everyday tour life?



MINDFULNESS

Pay attention to the moment.

Mindfulness is promoted constantly for positive mental health and wellbeing - and for good reason! It has proven benefits for the immune system, can improve concentration and memory, and can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Our minds are constantly running, thinking about the past, worrying about the future, or just trying to keep up with today. Our mind, like our body, needs rest and recuperation.

Mindfulness is that rest. By paying attention to the present moment, with an attitude of open, non-judgemental curiosity, it can help anchor you. In the vast uncertainty that is arts work, mindfulness helps you become aware that no matter how difficult things might be right now, they will inevitably change.

Find out more and give it a go - you've got nothing to lose by trying it!

smilingmind.com.au

healthdirect.gov.au/mindfulness-and-mental-health

headspace.com

au.reachout.com/articles/how-to-practise-mindfulness



I AM

... Not synonymous with my work

Often we label ourselves - "I am a Director / Actor / Lighting Designer" - reinforcing that feeling that we *are* our work.

- Keep it in perspective - "I am currently touring with [Show] as a [role]." It's just what you're doing right now - not your whole life.
- Cultivate your other interests - pack a sketchpad, crossword book, journal - give yourself mental space outside the show.
- Allocate 'me time' the same way you allocate time for daily routines such as brushing your teeth. Make self-care a habit, not a bonus.



CONNECT

Remember the outside world

Watch a news update, read a local paper, chat with family and friends near and far - anything that keeps you from becoming trapped in a tour bubble.

Social media can be helpful for staying in touch, but can also leave you feeling disengaged and left out. Social media often paints an unrealistic view of what's really going on.

Time spent on genuine connections is likely time better spent for mental health and wellbeing - explore the town, make new friends, and discover hidden gems.

Giving to others can have a positive impact on your mental health and wellbeing too. See if there's a local charity that holds meaning for you in the places you're touring. See if there's time to volunteer, or simply drop in and say hi.

PRE-TOUR

PACKING CHECKLIST



Clothes and shoes

- ☐ Plenty of socks and undergarments for a full week. Touring schedules can leave little time for washing, and you never know how far away the next washing machine might be!
- ☐ Clothes for all weather, and a range of activities (think comfy clothes for travel days through to something fancy for opening night dos or publicity events)
- ☐ Workout gear - swimwear, beach towel, goggles - even a bike or surfboard if you have extra baggage allowance!



Home away from home

- ☐ Comfort food
- ☐ Special piece of clothing
- ☐ Favourite blanket
- ☐ Photos of family and friends
- ☐ Scented candle or oils
- ☐ Your pillow (or if it won't fit, pop your favourite pillow cases in your luggage for a touch of home).



Electricals and entertainment

- ☐ Phone and CHARGER (pack a spare – someone always leaves theirs behind!)
- ☐ Adapters (if travelling overseas)
- ☐ Laptop/tablet
- ☐ Earphones/headphones
- ☐ Book(s)
- ☐ Cards / games
- ☐ Spare pens



Toiletries

- ☐ Skincare, nail care, haircare
- ☐ Toothbrush, toothpaste, mouth wash, dental floss
- ☐ Hygiene products
- ☐ Deodorant or crystal stick
- ☐ Perfume or cologne (be mindful of your tour party's sensitivity to fragrances)
- ☐ Make up / make up remover
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Stain remover stick (perfect for a quick basin wash or the odd stain)



Don't forget...

- ☐ Items of cultural or religious significance. Check the calendar before you go for any days of cultural or religious significance that might happen while you're on tour so you can plan appropriately.
- ☐ Any medications (and copies of prescriptions)
- ☐ If you have any ongoing medical, physical or mental health concerns, a referral letter from your GP can be helpful if you need to seek assistance on the road
- ☐ ID (passports, licenses etc.)
- ☐ **Download your favourite tunes before you go on tour**
Music does much more than just entertain us. It can also:
 - Trigger biochemical stress reducers
 - Reduce the perceived intensity of pain
 - Increase workout endurance and performance
 - Speed up post-workout recovery
 - Elevate mood while driving – crank up your tunes if you're feeling cranky in the car!



Kitchen kit

You never quite know what you are going to get in a hotel kitchen! You might be able to fit:

- ☐ Good knife and small chopping board
- ☐ Tupperware container and zip lock bags
- ☐ Basic cutlery/utensils set and your favourite mug (even your preferred pan/wok/baking dish if space allows)
- ☐ Single serve blender for on-the-go nutritious smoothies
- ☐ Basic ingredients (herbs, spices, salt and pepper, small bottle of olive oil, packed in a plastic bag) to save you buying them over and over in each city. Be sure to check biosecurity laws first.

Check (and double check) your luggage allowances, and always check with Company Management if you want to pack something on the tour truck.

PRE-TOUR

FEELING CONNECTED WITH OTHERS - A BASIC HUMAN NEED

While you might be around others on tour, being away from family and friends can take its toll.



Before you go, have a chat with your loved ones to come up with solutions for staying connected

What would be a reasonable expectation for how often you will be able to be in contact? Are there any periods that contact will be not possible? Would you prefer to work out a set communication routine, or would you prefer to be spontaneous?



Make the best of technology

Call, text, Skype, message, email - whatever works to stay in touch. Consider a closed social media group if you don't want to 'spam' your friends with tour updates!



Figure out what would make you feel more connected while you're away

Perhaps mates could send postcards to be waiting for you at the next town, or you could find a way to bring your partner for a visit.



Check for any important events

For example, birthdays or anniversaries that might take place while you're away. Chat about how you might celebrate from afar.



Work out a plan for managing potential crises at home

Who can help coordinate things and keep you up to date while you're away? There are times when life throws a curve ball, like an accident or an illness, and you can't be there - you'll feel better knowing a plan is in place if the unexpected happens.



Notice if you're feeling lonely

It sounds simple, but keeping an eye on your feelings can help you to take action. The antidote to loneliness is connection and you can seek it in many ways. Connect with a human or an animal in the community where you're staying, seek support from your tour mates or direct your attention back home.

TOURING WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

If you have an identified mental health condition, planning will be key.



Medication

Talk with your GP, specialist or psychiatrist before you leave and get their advice on how to manage your medication while you're away. The effectiveness of certain medicines follows the body clock, so interruption or reversal of the sleep/wake pattern can interfere with treatment.

If you need advice about medication while you're on tour, you can call 1300 MEDICINE (1300 633 424) from any state or territory between 9am and 5pm AEST (except NSW public holidays) or Nurse on Call (24/7 Victoria only) 1300 60 60 24.



Seeing your psychologist

Chat with them about whether you can continue having sessions while you're away, perhaps via video-conferencing or phone.

Schedule a pre-tour session to consider stressors and triggers to feeling unwell, and develop specific management strategies to implement while on the road.



Sharing your story

Consider disclosing to at least one trusted person on tour so you have someone to seek support from if needed.

If you work for an organisation you feel supported by and feel comfortable sharing your mental health journey, talk to them about what you need. It can be worthwhile to share with company management, too, confirming that you are prepared for touring, and you have a management plan in place.

You might need to be quite firm about your needs and boundaries. That's OK - your health is the most important thing.

ON TOUR

LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER

The pressures and practicalities of touring may increase your vulnerability and susceptibility to mental health problems, or exacerbate an existing condition. Be aware of your own mental health, and the mental health of your tour mates. If you've noticed that someone's not quite their 'usual self', act on it and start a conversation.

What is mental health?

The phrase 'mental health' is often misunderstood. You might hear it used as a substitute for mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety.

According to the World Health Organization, mental health is "a state of well-being in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community".

Mental health is not merely the absence of a mental health condition, but about being mentally healthy in the way we think, feel and develop relationships.

It can be helpful to think of mental health as being on a continuum:



Your mental health is not fixed. It is normal to move up and down the continuum throughout the course of your life, the tour, or even the day.

You might be feeling pretty good after a fun travel day, but then get really stressed out after a tight bump in. This is a normal response to a situation that most people would find stressful, and the stress resolves when the situation resolves.

Something becomes a mental health problem when the feelings are of such long duration and high intensity that they start to impact on your ability to function in everyday life.

Two of the most common mental health problems are anxiety disorders and depressive disorders.

Read more at headsup.org.au/your-mental-health/what-is-good-mental-health or consider undertaking an accredited Mental Health First Aid course artswellbeingcollective.com.au/sector-initiatives/

Anxiety disorders

We've all felt anxious at one time or another. Anxiety is a common response to a situation where we feel under pressure. An anxiety disorder is more severe, longer lasting, and impacts on your everyday functioning.

Signs and symptoms include:

- **Physical:** hot and cold flushes, racing heart, tightening of the chest, quick breathing, restlessness, or feeling tense, wound up and edgy
- **Psychological:** excessive fear, worry, catastrophizing, mind racing or going blank, indecisiveness, impatience, feeling on edge, confusion, nervousness
- **Behavioural:** avoidance of situations, obsessive or compulsive behaviour, distress in social situations, increased use of alcohol or other drugs

The sooner people with an anxiety disorder get support, the quicker their recovery journey may be. If you spot signs or symptoms of anxiety in yourself or someone else on tour, act quickly and seek help.

Even on tour, a local GP is a good first port of call.

Depressive disorders

While we all feel sad, moody or low from time to time, depression is more than just a low mood – it's a serious condition that affects your physical and mental health.

Key indicators

- Your mood is low most of the day, on most days
- You can't enjoy things you used to enjoy

Other signs and symptoms may include:

- Changes in appetite, weight, motivation, concentration, memory, sleep (especially waking up early and being unable to get back to sleep), reduced interest in sex
- Social withdrawal, anger, increased reliance on alcohol or other drugs
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, hopelessness, disappointment, indecision, irritability
- Suicidal thinking, planning or attempts, lots of thoughts about death

Depression is serious. If you spot signs or symptoms emerging in yourself or someone else on tour, professional help is needed. Visit a local GP, but if someone does become significantly unwell, they should go to a hospital emergency room.

Find out more beyondblue.org.au

ON TOUR

LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER



Start the conversation: What have you noticed?

Mention specific things that prompted you to check in:

- "You seem less chatty than usual. How are you?"
- "You don't seem yourself lately. What's happening for you at the moment?"
- "We haven't talked in a while... How are you going?"
- "I've heard you're going through some stuff – I'm here if you want to chat."
- "I've noticed that you're a bit flat – how are you coping with the tour?"
- "I'm worried about you. Do you want to run anything by me?"

- >> Be relaxed, friendly and concerned in your approach
- >> Ensure your genuine care and concern for the person leads the conversation - this is not an opportunity for gossip
- >> Unless you have concerns for the person's safety or the safety of those around them, ensure confidentiality and privacy



Encourage action

Encouraging someone to seek appropriate professional help is one of the most important things you can do.

- Be positive about the role of professionals in getting through tough times
- If you can, offer practical support - perhaps helping to find an appropriate professional, making a phone call on their behalf, or giving them a lift to an appointment



Check in

- Pop a reminder in your phone to check in.
- You could say: "I've been thinking of you and wanted to know how you've been going."
- Ask if they've found a better way to manage. If they haven't done anything, don't judge them.
- Stay in touch and be there for them. Genuine care and concern can make a real difference.



Listen without judgement

Just listen. You don't have to solve their problems or 'fix' anything.

Ask open-ended questions:

- "How are you feeling about that?"
- "How long have you felt that way?"
- "How would you like me to support you?"

Use all your best listening skills:

- Repeat back what you've heard and ask if you have understood them properly
- It is not always helpful to say "I know exactly how you feel...". You could share techniques that you use to manage your own mental health, but keep the focus on them, not you
- Take what they say seriously
- Don't interrupt or rush the conversation
- Sit patiently with silence
- Let them know it's ok to feel the way they do
- Be a friend - not a therapist

ON TOUR

LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER

When you're living in each other's pockets on tour, tiny issues can quickly become big problems. Keep conversations frequent, open and honest. You could even try a simple 'vibe check' at the end of each day to get a gauge on how the group is feeling.

Be timely

The sooner you can address an issue, the better. Have you ever had the experience where you've let something 'stew' for weeks, and then blurted it out at an inopportune moment? The longer you let something go, the more difficult it will be to have the conversation.

Be as specific as possible about the behaviour or issue

Avoid general or ambiguous statements. For example, "You need to be more talkative at bump in." What does that mean? What counts as 'talkative' to you, might not constitute 'talkative' to someone else. Say something specific and think about the task you want accomplished.

For example, "You have really good ideas about how to make the bump in more efficient. Could you share one or two suggestions during our OH&S briefing? It would bring so much to the team."

Consider your phrasing

It can be easy to sound accusatory or angry, for example, "You never set up the rehearsal room properly." Consider instead saying, "The rehearsal room was missing the tea and coffee stand when I came in this morning." This opens up an opportunity for discussion, rather than an accusation.

Be positive

Let the person know what you appreciate about them. Find something which is genuinely felt, rather than being positive because you feel you should.

Be non-judgemental

Your feedback is a personal statement about how you feel; not a judgement on their behaviour on behalf of the organisation, or judging their behaviour as good, bad or otherwise.

Do you both share the same version of success?

Consider the earlier example, "The rehearsal room was missing the tea and coffee stand when I came in this morning." Had you agreed on what time the stand should be set up? Make sure everyone's clear on what needs to be achieved and when.

Ever had a travel day where some people wanted to sleep and others wanted to hold singalongs? Long and tedious travel can test even the closest of friends. Acknowledging that these days can be challenging is the first step to making them less stressful.

Read the mood

Sometimes, everyone will be in a good place and enjoy music, games and chats. Other times, everyone will be sloths and just want to rest, or be irritable and just want to get it done. Be aware of those around you and know you are all in this together, so work together to find a happy medium.

It is well advised for all tour members to limit or ideally avoid drinking and smoking the evening before (and during the travel day) as dealing with someone who is irritable, smelly or hungover can be uncomfortable for everyone else in the car.

Nap wisely

Travel naps are inevitable, but long naps can impact your sleep schedule on arrival, so if possible, try other activities such as reading, writing, listening to music, meditation, podcasts or audiobooks.

Pack your headphones, charge your phone and download music, podcasts and books before you hit the road.

Take breaks

When you take a break, aim for a quick walk to get in some exercise and alone time to give yourself a break from the group.

Remember to respect the additional responsibilities of the driver and to keep the car calm for them, help them stay focused, and offer extra breaks when needed.

HELPFUL SUPPORT SERVICES

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF AND EACH OTHER

It is ok to ask for help. If you, or someone on tour is having a rough time, don't carry on alone.

These services are designed to be there for you when you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed. Don't ever worry that you're not distressed or upset enough. Touring can be tough, and you're only human.

If life is in danger, call 000.

BeyondBlue: 1300 22 4636 (24/7) or visit beyondblue.org.au to chat online (3pm to midnight) or join an online forum

Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24/7)

Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467 (24/7)

SANE Australia: 1800 187 263 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

QLife (LGBTQI): 1800 184 527 (3pm to midnight)

Mensline: 1300 789 978 (24/7)

Griefline: 1300 845 745 (12pm to 3am)

DirectLine 1800 888 236

Gambling Help: 1800 858 858 (24/7)

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 (24/7)

Support Act Wellbeing Helpline: 1800 959 500 (24/7)

Actors Benevolent Funds and Trusts

Victorian Actors Benevolent Trust
vabt.com.au | 0411 524 929

Actors Benevolent Fund of NSW
actorsbenevolentfund.org.au | 02 9333 0915

Actors & Entertainers Benevolent Fund (QLD)
abfqld.com.au | 07 3846 0044

Performing Arts WA
performingartswa.org.au/benvolence

New Zealand Actors Benevolent Fund
nzabf.org.nz

ON TOUR

EAT WELL

Hectic schedules, lack of cooking facilities, lack of healthy options and no access to supermarkets can challenge even the most food-conscious among us! You'll need plenty of energy for touring, so a good quality nutritious diet is really important for your physical and mental health.

Give yourself a break if your diet isn't perfect all the time – sometimes you need the comfort of a familiar food, or an occasional late-night meal with your tour mates. It's all about balance and what helps you to be at your best.

Preparing

- Does your accommodation have cooking facilities? If so, what sort?
- Where is the closest supermarket? Is there time in the schedule for a quick shop?
- Can you organise a grocery delivery direct to the hotel through online shopping?
- What are the local restaurants like?
- Were you able to pack a kitchen kit? Or did someone else, and you can share?
- What are your favourite basic nutritious recipes that work for you? Smoothies, omelettes, and stir fries are easy options that pack in the nutrients, are cost effective, and quick to prepare.

Managing meal times

- If you can, have breakfast. It kicks your metabolism into gear for the rest of the day.
- Try eating less food more often - snacks like nuts can keep you level throughout the day.
- Move away from the sugar and towards the protein where possible.
- Know yourself – if nerves or scheduling means you can't eat before a show or a bump in, figure out when to have your main meal.
- Experiment until you find your rhythm. For example:



Matinee

You might be able to manage a big breakfast, snack until post-show and then have a big late-lunch and a small dinner.



Evening Performance

You might be able to pack in a big breakfast, have a lighter lunch and just snack post-show. Then, next morning, hopefully you'll be hungry for a big brekkie again!

Eating late at night

- Your digestive system is designed for food to be eaten during the day. It's relatively inactive at night, which can cause problems if you have a late meal post-show.
- Eating less than two hours before sleep can lead to acid reflux, disrupted sleep and can wreak havoc with your hunger signals the next day.
- If you're hungry late at night, try eating a small meal containing a complex carbohydrate with a quality protein source. For example:
 - Natural yoghurt with fruit and nuts
 - Wholegrain toast with avocado and cheese
 - Vegetable sticks and wholegrain crackers with hummus

Eating on the road

Roadside eateries are not really known for their nutritious fare, but often they can be the only option.



Look for:

- ✓ Roast meat and roasted potatoes and any greens (e.g. peas) you can get.
- ✓ Wraps are a better choice over white bread or burger buns. Look for ones containing some salad and lean meat (e.g. grilled chicken wraps).
- ✓ Check if the fridge section has a yoghurt or fruit salad. Travelling with unsalted mixed nuts is great to add to this type of meal.
- ✓ Pack a few meal replacement shakes or bars in case you get really stuck.



Avoid:

- x Pastry (meat pies, sausage rolls, sweet treats)
- x Deep-fried food
- x Snacks that are high in sugar that give you a quick high but not sustained energy.

Want to find out more about healthy eating?
Visit eatforhealth.gov.au

ON TOUR

DRINK WELL



And we don't mean alcohol! But, let's start there. Post-show drinks, riders, opening night and closing night parties...

The accessibility of alcohol while on tour can lead to challenges. If your touring party is keen to reduce the risk of harm from alcohol, start by looking for ways to shift the culture of drinking in the performing arts.

For example, offer plenty of interesting non-alcoholic beverages at special events, find other ways to celebrate or wind-down with the team, and give opening/closing night gifts that aren't centred on alcohol.

If you do drink alcohol, it is important to consider the additional load it can place on your already stressed system when on tour. The health risks that accumulate over a lifetime from alcohol increase progressively - the more you drink, the greater the risk.

No level of drinking alcohol can be guaranteed as completely safe. It is recommended that healthy adults:

- Drink no more than two standard drinks on any day
- No more than four standard drinks on a single occasion.

Be honest about why and how often you drink. If you feel you have a problematic relationship with alcohol, please seek the advice of a health care professional.

Good alternatives

Cold bubbly drinks: Lime and soda, ginger cordial and soda, non-alcoholic beer and wine.

Herbal tea: Try a relaxing herbal tea blend to unwind.

Kombucha tea: A nice alternative for a nightcap.

Non-alcoholic beverages for functions: Mocktails, iced tea, fresh juice, homemade lemonade, ginger beer, natural soft drinks, milkshakes, spiders, smoothies, icy drinks (e.g. snow cones).

Wind-down without alcohol: Post-show games night, meet for a cup of tea in the hotel lobby, share a big jug of iced water and rehydrate together, take turns at creating a themed post-show mocktail, check what else is open late (e.g. ice cream shops, cafes, comedy clubs) and focus on shared experiences and conversations.

Get the facts - alcohol.gov.au
eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/fat-salt-sugars-and-alcohol/alcohol



Coffee. There's nothing wrong with a few. But, are you relying on it to get started for the day or to get you through a show?

Everyone metabolises caffeine differently. If your dependence is strong, it's likely your energy, mood and health would benefit from reducing your intake.

Caffeine increases the circulation of chemicals such as cortisol and adrenaline in the body. In small doses, it can make you feel refreshed and focused. In large doses, you are likely to feel anxious and have difficulty sleeping.

Consider when you want to get to sleep and make sure you have your last coffee at least six hours before. Even if you fall asleep easily with caffeine in your system, it's unlikely you will get essential restorative quality sleep.

Good alternatives

Green tea: Contains a small amount of caffeine, so takes the edge off withdrawals.

Peppermint tea: Promotes focus and alertness.

Dandelion root tea: If you rely on coffee to promote bowel movement, try this instead - it's a digestive, liver tonic and mild laxative.

Find out more and check your caffeine intake at:
betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/caffeine



Water is essential to most bodily functions - in fact, the body is made up of 50 to 75 per cent water!

The best way to hydrate is by drinking small amounts of water or other fluids frequently throughout the day.

Food usually makes up 20% of our water intake. Fresh fruit and vegetables, smoothies, soups, and vegetable juices are all great for hydration.

How much water do you need?

Aim for 8 to 10 cups of water a day - or, approximately 2.1L for women, and 2.6L for men. You might need to increase this during times of physical activity - think bump in, bump out, or if you've got a particularly physical role in a show.

Read more about staying hydrated at
betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/HealthyLiving/water-a-vital-nutrient

ON TOUR

WIND DOWN

Whether onstage or backstage, you can be pretty wired after a performance. This makes total sense - you have been under pressure to get things right, dealing with small margins of error and relying on your mind and body to get the job done. Your emotional-brain reckons shows are a dangerous thing to do, even if your rational-brain doesn't agree. As a result, you have a sympathetic nervous system response which floods your body with adrenaline and activates you so you're ready for anything. No wonder you can't sleep straight after a show!

What your body needs is help to get the nervous system into parasympathetic mode – the 'rest and digest' rhythm you need for sleep. Expect to spend an hour winding-down before bed - here are some techniques to try.



Put the day to bed (so you can go to bed!) - write down (or talk out) any thoughts about the day and put them away. What went well? What would you do differently next time? Psychologists call this 'emotional processing' and there is evidence that 15 to 20 minutes writing in this way each day is beneficial for sleep.



Try gentle exercises like yoga, stretching, or walking. If you are staying close to the theatre and feel safe, a walk home after the show could be a good way to start the wind down process.



Take a shower and spend that time imagining the show and the day being washed off.



Rest in bed – time resting is still valuable for body and mind. Search the web for a 'progressive muscle relaxation' and see if that works for you.



Read, or engage with audio books, gentle music, or mindfulness (see page 5 for more information on mindfulness).



Limit screen use to less than two hours before bed. Light from screens can keep us awake, and certain types of screen use (social media, games) can increase brain activity and alertness. It's hard because when you're away as screens can help you connect with your loved ones, and entertain you when you're wired after a show.

If you must use screens prior to going to sleep, at least turn on night shift (iPhone) or use F.lux (cross platform) to adjust the screen to the warmer end of the spectrum, which is easier on the eyes and less stimulating. As with all the recommendations here, it is important to make an assessment for your individual situation.

Getting out of character

There's an added element to the post-performance wind down for actors – separating oneself from the character.

There are currently no research-based guidelines for getting out of character. The following ideas are drawn from anecdotal evidence and clinical experience:

- Connect with your body – dance, do yoga, walk, take some deep breaths, physically shake the character off - arms, legs, hands, feet.
- Create a 'self-kit' – a little box or bag of things that remind you of who you are outside of work. These could be keepsakes from loved ones, objects that represent your hobbies, favourite snacks.
- Pop your headphones on and crank up your favourite playlist or watch a cartoon you loved as a child.
- Carefully remove any make-up, wigs, markings etc. worn as the character.
- Change into an outfit that is comforting, or expresses your personality, or both.
- Smells can evoke powerful memories - use a particular perfume or deodorant when portraying the character, then rinse it off and use one that represents you
- Call a loved one and find out the details of their day. The tiny details of daily life can be a good antidote to the epic arc of performance. Plus, you get to speak to someone who loves you for you.
- Notice when your mind supplies you with thoughts or suggestions that are from the character. Practise saying to yourself, "Thanks mind, but that's (CHARACTER), that's not me" and then turn your attention back to what you were doing in the present moment.

ON TOUR

SLEEP WELL

Late nights, early mornings, jet lag and long hours can impact your sleep patterns. Have a look through these strategies and pick one or two to work on – you don't need to implement them all at once! Your goal is to set up conditions that are conducive to sleep: being sleepy and being relaxed.

Sleep is essential for your health. It refreshes the mind and repairs the body. When you're functioning well, your body will give you the type and amount of sleep that's needed all by itself.



How much sleep do I need?

While there is no 'one size fits all', some large scale studies recommend seven to nine hours being optimal. A small minority of people need only five hours of sleep each night, while others require up to 10 hours.

Good sleepers take less than 30 minutes to fall asleep and will wake up once or twice during the night. We all have nights where it takes a long time to fall asleep, or we're wakeful overnight. This is often triggered by stress, and will usually pass after a night or two. The body is designed to tolerate short term sleep loss.

If you do have a sleepless night, research shows that we only need to catch up one-third of the sleep lost. So, if you sleep for two hours on one night and you normally get six hours, the next night you will only need to get one extra hour to catch up.

Try to aim for a longer sleep after a poor or short night, but don't feel you have to recover every lost minute of sleep.



What is insomnia?

Insomnia is the most common sleep disorder, defined as regular and chronic difficulty falling asleep or returning to sleep following night-time awakening, with significant consequences for daytime functioning and/or mood.

The good news is that insomnia and poor sleep usually respond well to treatment. If you are worried about your sleep, speak to your GP.



Should I take sleeping pills if I can't sleep?

If you're considering sleeping pills, speak with your GP and ask for advice before using any medication.

Tips for sleeping well

Get up at the same time each day - where possible, within an hour.

Go to bed only when sleepy - that is, close to nodding off. If you are not sleepy, engage in a 'wind down' activity (see page 14) - don't expect to finish work at 11pm and be sound asleep by 11.30pm! You need time to unwind.

Don't worry, plan or problem solve in bed - if this disruptive thinking occurs frequently, set aside time each day to do the thinking, problem solving and planning that your brain wants to do.

Don't sleep with the enemy – get rid of the clock. Trial not looking at the clock overnight. Do this for at least a week before you decide whether it's a helpful strategy for you. Whether it is 11pm, 2am or 4am your aim should be the same - relax and let sleep happen.

Manage matinees - finish work at 11pm and have a matinee the next day? You may have to anticipate a shorter sleep for the night (as an exception, not the rule). A shorter sleep once or twice a week over the course of the season should be sustainable for most people.

Manage sleeping in different rooms - reduce noise (use ear plugs or request a room away from the lift). Reduce light (eye masks, or black out curtains). Bring your own pillow if you can - one that you know is comfortable – or request additional/different pillows from your accommodation provider.

Manage fatigue - mindset is key. Reassure yourself that a night of short sleep here and there is OK.

- Try self-talk along the lines of "I am willing to feel fatigued for this short period because I am doing the job I love and have worked so hard for".
- What is happening outside the body - what can you hear, see, touch, and smell? Focus on this rather than focussing inwardly on symptoms of fatigue, which can intensify the fatigue experience.
- Spend time outside in sunlight.
- Know what re-energises you - do you benefit from time alone (introverts) or do your energy levels pick up when socialising (extroverts)?
- Try a short daytime sleep of 10 to 20 minutes - power naps can be hugely beneficial!

ON TOUR

GET MOVING

No access to a gym? No time? No room? No worries!

Take a brisk walk

'Brisk' means you can still talk but not sing, and you may be puffing slightly. Aim for 30 minutes a day if possible (try three ten-minute brisk walks if you're struggling to find a 30 minute slot - perfect for rest stop breaks!).

Walking helps to maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, improve management of various conditions (including diabetes, high cholesterol and hypertension), strengthens your bones and muscles, and improve your balance.

Find out more about the benefits of walking at betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/walking-for-good-health

Skipping

According to the British Rope Skipping Association, 10 minutes of skipping can have the same health benefits as a 45-minute run (and skipping ropes are cheap to buy and easy to pack!)

Skipping is a full body workout which uses your abdominals to stabilise the body, legs for jumping, shoulders and arms for turning the rope. Skipping can:

- Burn up to 1,300 calories per hour and help with muscle toning
- Help in muscle toning as it is a body weight exercise
- Improve footwork, balance, coordination and agility
- Give a full body workout either indoors or outdoors

Therabands

Therabands are often used for upper body rehabilitation. Tie them to a door knob or to other furniture and get a great upper body strength workout.

Therabands come in different colours representing different levels of resistance, so it's easy to develop a graded strength program.

Yoga

Flat, light weight, and easy to lay on top of your bag, add a yoga mat to your travel kit. If you are travelling with a computer or tablet, you can download plenty of great yoga sessions to complete in the comfort of your own room.

Go mobile

There are lots of apps which will help you take your exercise program with you. Search your app store for your favourite type of workout. There are sensational apps for yoga and interval training (and even workouts that can be done in under ten minutes with no equipment).

Stretching counts!

Whether it's a rest stop break, chilling in the green room, or a warm up before bump in, take time to stretch.

Swimming

Swimming provides countless benefits to both the mind and body, so consider packing swimwear and goggles.

Mix it up

Variety is important and helps you stay curious and engaged. Also, your body likes it. Lift weights in your hotel room one day, go to the local bowls club the next.

Local Options

- Hire a bike and explore the town
- Research walking tracks and outdoor exercise facilities
- Walk around a gallery or exhibition
- Visit a Farmers Market and stock up on healthy produce
- Explore getting a multisite pass to a 24 hour gym
- Community centres often host free or low cost fitness classes (Zumba, yoga, Tai Chi, walking groups etc.)

How do I exercise when I feel constantly exhausted?

It is essential to manage your energy levels, particularly while on tour. It is important to know your own body, and what it's used to, and your personal exercise needs.

Touring can sometimes be a 'shock to the system', where suddenly you're doing a lot more or a lot less physical activity than usual. Pay attention to:

- Your preferred time of day for exercise
- How much more or less exercise you are doing on tour and whether you need to cut back or up the intensity
- Your diet, sleep and hydration - addressing these first might help reduce your feelings of exhaustion and enable you to increase exercise
- Days off! Make sure your exercise regime or the tour schedule isn't exhausting you - always have at least one day off organised exercise and workout sessions per week to maximise rest and recovery.
- Go easy on yourself - touring can mess with your routines. That's OK. Take your time and enjoy the journey - you might invent new routines on tour that work even better for you!

ON TOUR

BALANCING WORK/HOME LIFE

Identifying a personal goal to work towards on tour can help meaningfully fill downtime, help keep work/life in perspective, and give you a sense of control.



Professional goals – Finish writing that screenplay, update your portfolio, master that accent.



Wellbeing goals – Develop an exercise routine, improve your fitness, practice your cooking skills.



Creative goals – Learn a new craft, try a new hobby, create a photographic story, start your blog, write music.



Personal goals – Engage in online education, research a topic you have always been interested in, create a memory book for someone special.



Financial goals – Appreciating how 'feast vs. famine' working in the arts industry can be, consider specific financial goals you could work towards while on tour:

Consider your budget before you go on tour. Treat yourself to meals out and different experiences on occasion but setting yourself a personal weekly spending limit is recommended.

Do all you can to spend within your earnings, rather than relying on credit cards, which you keep you in debt.

Living away from home can easily become more expensive if not managed well. There may be some home and personal expenses that you can avoid for the period, but many will continue. Consider renting out your room/apartment/house, see what services you can suspend, or spend time researching better deals on your utilities and insurances.

Review your mobile/data plan before you travel, knowing that you will likely rely on this more while travelling. Paying for larger plans is often much more economical than paying for over usage.

Take some down time to learn about long term savings, investing and superannuation. A little saved regularly over the long term can help you pay off your debts, save for a home deposit, and make your retirement more comfortable. Starting early is the key!

The hardest part about achieving a goal is starting! Try the SMART theory of goal setting:



Specific. Goals that are too vague and general are hard to achieve. Include specifics such as 'who, where, when, why and what'. Just like approaching a character!



Measurable. Ideally, goals should include a quantity of 'how much' or 'how many', for example, drinking two litres of water per day. This makes it easy to know when you have reached the goal.



Achievable. Goals should be challenging, but achievable. Setting goals that are too difficult can be discouraging and lead to giving up altogether. Aim for success, which will motivate you to continue.



Relevant. The goal should seem important and beneficial to you.



Time-related. 'You don't need more time, you just need a deadline'. Deadlines can motivate efforts and prioritise the task above other distractions.

Break your goal down into steps and write an action plan for each step. Work on it regularly, a little each day, and be sure to celebrate and share your achievements.

POST-TOUR

READJUSTING TO HOME LIFE

Sometimes when you've been in the 'tour bubble', coming home can be daunting. You may be facing a period of unemployment, or, you might finish one tour and immediately start on the next project without really resting – a recipe for burnout.



A time of change

Adjusting to changes – like how you spend your time or what sort of things you are thinking about – requires energy from our minds and our bodies. The bigger the shift, the bigger the adjustment needs to be, and the more mental and physical resources you will need to devote to it.

It can be helpful to view touring in this context – as a circumstance that inherently requires multiple and constant adjustments. The end of a tour is a milestone that, even in the nicest of circumstances, will require an adjustment.

Regularity and relaxation are great for softening the stress we experience during times of adjustment. Regularity is the antithesis of change, and relaxation helps us sustain the energy required to endure change.



Acknowledge

At the very least, acknowledge that adjusting to change requires energy.

It takes time to establish new patterns and to re-establish old ones. Be kind to yourself and affirm that post-tour life is unlikely to feel 'normal' straight away.

If you can, try to implement some 'home life' patterns towards the end of the tour – simple things like eating what you might eat at home, connecting regularly with friends that you normally see at home.

By putting some of this into the final days of the tour, the shift from tour to home life is likely to feel slightly less abrupt and slightly more familiar.

Consider having transitional objects – is there something that represents the tour to you, a memento or object that can transition from tour to home with you?

Perhaps even something you can take from home to the tour from the start. The object can then be a consistent symbol of the tour, and a permanent connection to your tour experience, even once the tour is over.



Routine

Pick up aspects of old routines one at a time, such as bed times, breakfast items, exercise and so on.

Block out time in your schedule to replenish and nourish yourself, employ relaxation strategies, plan familiar rituals and activities like catching up with friends, doing washing, walking the dog.

Good physical health and sleep are essential. Keep in mind that it can take at least a week of consistency to establish new sleep patterns.



Connect

The abrupt change to social habits formed on tour might make you feel lonely. You might even experience a kind of grief process when leaving the "tour family".

Try to keep up social connections on homecoming – nourish old friendships, spend time with people you care about, visit your favourite local places, and continue to connect with colleagues.

You might not be the only one re-adjusting to the end of tour. Family or friends might seem resentful when you come home (even though they are happy to see you, they are adjusting too!).

It's just an adjustment period – patterns of routine, roles and responsibilities have been changed when you are on tour, so it can take some time for patterns of 'home life' to feel harmonious again.

Don't be shy – get in touch with your tour-mates! They might be wishing for connection too. Give them a call and share stories.

POST-TOUR

READJUSTING TO HOME LIFE



Talk

Talk to colleagues who are willing to share their experiences of adjusting post-tour and see if you gain any tips.

Try to verbalise, with someone you trust, the weirdness of being away and your feelings about the relationships you left behind on tour.

You might notice increased anxiety about your finances at the end of touring – it could be a good time to connect with a financial counsellor.

Allow yourself to experience whatever emotions are needed – sadness, confusion, grief, gratitude, relief. Emotions are normal reactions to endings, even when they might feel more unpredictable or intense.

Try not to judge what you feel and reach out for support if you become overwhelmed.



Reflect and celebrate

Reflect on what you'd like to improve for the next time you're on tour, and importantly, celebrate all the things that went well on tour!

Engage in some self-reflection and identify what aspects of the end of tour might be potent for you – for some people the loss of structure can be hard. Others, it's loneliness after relationships drift when the show wraps.

Each of these different aspects would benefit from a different contingency plan, so create one that is specific to your own coping style.

Make meaning – we humans are meaning-making creatures. What did you learn while you were away? What do you know about yourself, your craft, the world that you didn't know before? Use your creativity to put it into words or images or sounds.

Endings are also new beginnings – keep focused on the future, and take the opportunity to establish new helpful patterns. It can be a useful time to establish helpful supports for any lingering difficulties.



If in doubt

If you feel stuck, just remember the super trio:

Exercise	Connect	Sleep
Keep up physical activity.	Socialise with those around you.	Get consistent sleep.

If things continue to feel overwhelming, book a check up with a GP. It's a great start to implementing some professional help to support your mental health throughout the adjustment (and beyond!).

Give yourself a pat on the back. You've done a great job!

Chookas and tour well!
artswellbeingcollective.com.au



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