

# Avoiding Exhaustion at Walt Disney World, Part 1: Plan for Success: A Walt Disney World Special Needs Article

by Amy Wear, PassPorter Guest Contributor

From adults with chronic pain and fatigue to seniors with arthritis and other conditions that limit mobility, many visitors to Walt Disney World need to make energy conservation a top priority when planning their vacations.

While it's common to return from Walt Disney World needing a vacation from the vacation, adults with special needs want to avoid exhaustion so they can enjoy their entire trip.

Here are just some of the strategies you can put in place in the vacation planning stages:

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□ Choose your vacation dates carefully. While park touring in high crowds can be aggravating for everyone, the stress involved for someone with chronic pain and fatigue is magnified and can easily lead to a flare-up. Use a site like [www.easywdw.com](http://www.easywdw.com) or have a travel agent specializing in Disney destinations help you plan for the least crowded days and times of the year to visit. Also consider the possibility of weather delays when traveling during the winter months and how these could impact your vacation enjoyment.

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□ Beware extreme heat and humidity. Extreme heat can be a major obstacle and should be anticipated between late April and mid-October. Some people with conditions such as fibromyalgia, however, actually tolerate heat very well and welcome the chance to be in high heat and humidity. If you must travel in the hotter months, plan to take frequent rest breaks and avoid the peak heat of the day.

Choose optimal flights. Where possible, choose flight times for when you are at your best. Consider paying more for a direct flight from a nearby airport, so you can minimize the energy drain that comes with air travel. Mid-day flights are ideal for ensuring adequate sleep the night before you travel and for giving you time to unwind once you arrive at your resort.

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□ Stay close to the parks. If you can afford it, book your vacation at one of the deluxe Disney resorts close to your favorite park(s) to drastically cut down on the energy expended just traveling to and from your resort. It will also make afternoon breaks from the parks more feasible for you.

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□ Since you are apt to spend more time at your resort than others, splurging on deluxe is an extra-special treat. Many guests would rather visit the World less frequently in order to afford the special perks of staying at a deluxe resort. It is also wise to choose a smaller resort that doesn't require as much walking or to pay for a preferred room that is close to the amenities you wish to use.

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□ Skip the park hopper. Since you want to pace yourself and avoid spending full days at the parks, you will likely manage fine with a base ticket. Simply return to the same park after your break from the parks. If you do want to retain the option to visit a different park after a break, however, or have more flexibility with dining reservations, a park hopper will come in handy.

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□ Make Advance Dining Reservations. Using MyMagic+, you can make dining reservations 180 days prior to your arrival at Walt Disney World. Make a general plan for each day of your vacation so that you can try to overlap dining reservations with the park you will visit that day. This way you won't waste time and energy traveling from one part of the World to another.

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□ Consider booking some restaurants for convenience rather than rave reviews, such as the low-key restaurant at your resort for a planned rest day. Note that most of the character meals are buffets, which can be overstimulating and usually require several trips to and from the table to gather your food. You may prefer quieter a la carte table service restaurants, which allow you to have a restful meal.

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□ Prioritize park attractions and use Fastpass+. Make a list of all the attractions you'd be disappointed to miss in each park. Disney resort guests can choose fastpasses 60 days prior to their scheduled arrival at Walt Disney World. Off-site guests must wait until 30 days prior to arrival. Use the My Disney Experience app to reserve three attractions for each day of your vacation. Give careful thought to the best time of day for you to enjoy the fastpass attractions.

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□ Use a packing list. Start with a thorough packing list like the one provided in Passporter's Walt Disney World or search for one on Pinterest. Be sure to add to the list any special equipment, devices, or medications you may need to be at your best while on vacation. Plan to dress for function and comfort. Disney is not a fashion show!

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□ Do not overlook footwear! Ensure you pack comfortable footwear that won't leave you with blisters after just one day of walking. Be sure to bring your orthotic insoles with you. Most first-timers severely

underestimate the amount of time spent walking at Disney parks.

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□ Stay tuned for Part 2, where I'll cover touring strategies you can use during your vacation to maximize enjoyment and minimize the risk of overextending yourself.

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