

- Hey, it's Monica from DAT Solutions, here with our trucking Ask Me Anything Series, where we ask expert carriers, and brokers, to weigh in on your questions. This week, we asked the experts, how do I stay healthy while I'm on the road? Several carriers weighed in, and here's what they had to say.

- One of the biggest things that ever helped me out was three to four hours before bed time I won't eat anything. And I'll just drink water, just to try to get all the sugar, carbs, and all that stuff out of the system before I lay down. I don't drink sodas anymore. I used to drink five or six sodas a day, and I just crammed up with sugars. And since doin' that, my knees don't ache anymore, my elbows don't ache anymore, it's like all the aches in my joints went away when I got off sugars. I may have one or possibly two DOT sodas a day for the caffeine when I'm not drinkin' coffee. And even when I'm drinkin' coffee nowadays, I drink my coffee black, no creamer, no sugar, no nothin'. But the most vital thing as a truck driver and stayin' healthy in the truck is get active. No matter if you're at a shipper, you're at a rest area on a break, it doesn't matter if you're at a truck stop with a lot of space like Iowa 80, or even if you're just at a lil' mom and pop. What I do is on my phone I set me a timer, it's 15 minutes minimum and I take and get a good brisk pace. That way I can get my heart rate up and just keep walkin'. And sometimes even, if it gets to the point where you're startin' to limp, been there many times. I would just take a little brisk break, and try to keep my heart rate up. And then I continue on. But ideally I wanna do 30 minutes a day. For me, that's been the most beneficial in stayin' healthy while in the truck, where majority of the time we're sittin' on our butt just drivin' down the road.

- A few things that I do to stay healthy on the road is I need to get proper rest. So with me gettin' proper rest, guess what, that's gonna help me feel energized, it's gonna make me wanna go and drive for the day. Also, I need to exercise. So whenever I make my thirty minute break, or whenever I stop drivin', I get out, I may walk around the facility, I may walk around the rest area. I may do some push ups, some jumpin' jacks. And that is very important for you to be able to stay healthy while you on the road. Another thing, and this is my last thing, that I do is you got to eat healthy. Eating healthy is number one priority. You can't eat a lot of junk food and be drivin', so you need to be able to eat healthy, you gotta plan your day, you have to plan your meal plans, just like you're planning your route from Atlanta to Texas. You have to plan. It is priority. So few things that I do to stay healthy on the road.

- Well first recognize that you do have a health problem and start doing something about it. If you feel like you are three french fries from a heart attack then maybe holdin' the steerin' wheel for 70 hours a week isn't for you. Spend less time driving, and more time focused on what you can do to improve your health. If you go to get your DOT physical and you're havin' problems on passing it, instead of looking for the doctor that's going to be more lenient on passing you, recognize what those problems are and start workin' on it. One of the things that I did, my cholesterol was really high and it really wasn't a problem on passin' the DOT physical, but what I started doing was goin' down the road to listen to audible books about how to lower cholesterol. That got me off of the cholesterol medicine. And I think that could help other people as well. Another big one that I think would help out a lot of drivers is if they would, my bad habit used to be chewing tobacco,

disgusting I know. I did it for a long time. But I used the Nicotine patches and was able to quit that. And anyway, that would be my advice on it.

- Number one of course, don't have food in reach distance while you're driving. Don't put that little cooler right next to you. Have your water, have your coffee, that's it. Whenever I have a choice in a parking lot of a truck stop I will go to the very last row. That forces me to walk to the building for a long time and also it helps with the doggie. Last row, nobody bothers you, he can run around, it gets you out too. I would always unload my own freight, it's LTL frozen food so gives me a lot of exercise. I also as you can see I have always took foldable bicycle with me. It fits nicely, like this big. Through the window, the side window of my truck I can get it in and out, it's 35 pounds. And I would in my down time bicycle around, excursions, check out the surrounding of the truck. Resistance bands, you can put them up anywhere. And I would have them either outside my truck on some of those hinges, or inside the truck if it's raining, you just , it's fantastic. Of course truck stop food, I stay away unless there are salads. No soda. Absolutely no soda. You think Mountain Dew is gonna keep you awake? No, black coffee. Black coffee and your mind.

- The most important thing is get out of your truck. Do a lot more walkin', I mean even if it's to go to the ship room receiver, don't be lazy, and be more active and whenever y'all go home, the best thing to do is get real active at home. And I'm not saying get active goin' to the movies and things, I'm talkin' 'bout like get out and cut your grass, chop down some trees, work in your yard, plant flowers, do things like that when you're at home. That way your body's gettin' the exercise that it needs, that you normally don't get out here on the road. One thing I have learned for 25 years of experience, from somethin' that happened to me in the past, it's very important that a trucker stretches his body every single mornin', and every single night before he goes to bed. I mean 'specially your legs and your lower body, make sure you stretch as much as possible because at some point that's gonna cause you to hurt and have a lot of pain as a truck driver, because when you're sittin' behind the wheel, your muscles shrink so therefore it cause your muscles to get real tight. And when you get my age, you have a tendency to have a lot of pain from mus--

- Some of the things that we're seeing is the truck stops are starting to put more healthy choices, fruits and vegetables. They're a little bit limited, but you have to have some self control when you go in to get it. They do have hard boiled eggs. What I like to do is go by Walmart once a week, and get a little bag of avocados. The avocados take time to ripen up, so as they get ripe, one per day, an avocado a day is so good for you. And I'll mix one avocado with a hard boiled egg and mash it all up, it's very filling, it's very healthy, it's good for you. Drink a lot of water, that's hard for all of us because we have to stop to go to the bathroom. When you're at the shipper and receiver, and you know they're gonna be there for a while I always ask them, "How long do you think it will be?" And if they say "Two hours." I say, "Okay, I'm gonna be out walking "in the parking lot is that okay?" The last tip that I would give you is when you're done driving, get on the back of your bunk and lift your legs up as high as you can, even if you're putting your feet on the top bunk or against the wall, for at least 20 minutes. This is gonna help the circulation, it's gonna help the blood get to your heart, it's gonna help the fluid come out of your legs that has accumulated while you're driving. The other thing

that I will do is once I've turned around I will make my head go over the back of the bunk, without falling over on my head. I let my arms fall back to relieve the pressure in my neck, and my shoulder. And it helps all of the blood move around all the place and I feel so much better and relieve a lot of stress. I hope this helps you, and I hope you guys are safe on the road. Thanks, bye bye.