

How can I prepare to be a traveling nurse?

Question: I am 55 years old... my experience as an RN is on a skilled unit in a 70 bed facility. We work with PICC lines and IV's, but our equipment is not up-to-date. As an LPN I worked in OB (postpartum, nursery, and 2nd nurse in L&D). I need experience before I can become a travel nurse... but what kind? Would a year of med-surg. nursing in a large hospital prepare me for travel nursing?

Response: This is a question that many nurses face when considering travel nursing. Are you prepared to be a traveling nurse? What do you need to do? You took the first step to seek knowledge. I can tell you are determined when you know what you want. Nursing is great because we have so many options.

First, you need to decide what specialty you would like to work in when you travel? Is Medical Surgical nursing the type of nursing you want to do while you're traveling? Would you like to work in Labor and Delivery? The travel nursing agencies will want you to be very specific at to what specialties you have worked in, how long, and how recently you worked in them.

Once you have decided what specialty you would be most happy working in, get your year of experience. At the end of the year, ask yourself how capable you feel in your skills. If you are not sure, you may want to try local registry work in the area. This will allow you to work at different hospitals to see what it is like to use your skills in new situations. Once you feel you have a solid footing to venture out, you can call up a few companies and see what assignments they have to offer.

You may be surprised at all the opportunities out there. A whole new world could open up for you. If you try something and you don't like it, nothing is lost. People often regret what they didn't try rather than what they did.