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The Necessity of Touring for Independent Musicians by Martin Atkins

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Posted by Martin Atkins in [Live Shows](#), [Business View](#)



Martin Atkins has a 30 year career in the music business that includes touring with the bands Public Image Limited, Killing Joke, Ministry, Nine Inch Nails and Pigface, owning an independent record label celebrating its 20th anniversary with over 350 releases, and is an instructor at Columbia College Chicago teaching The Business of Touring, Applied Marketing, and Indie Label Management. He is also the author of the book [Tour:Smart](#).

Before we delve into the wonderful world of touring logistics, strategies, great ideas that can help, bad ideas that won't, and a few stories along the way; perhaps we should ponder if, with all of the technological advancements every day AND (for f's sake) the price of gas!, If it's even necessary to tour anymore?

Yes it is, you know it is, stop smoke-screening you lazy bastard and get with it!!

You don't need to look far for an example of how important it is to get out there. Do you think for one second that, if it wasn't essential, that politicians ever leave home? Most of those guys can't even bring themselves to think about other people, let alone touch them—(unless it's on the ass). So the only reason they are out there is: 1. More ass, or 2. Their advisors told them that they had to, showed them the evidence, and pushed them out the door. Think about this the next time you see one of them getting on the 'truth bus' or whatever crap they are selling this week.

Every single element affecting your career and your ability to continue is helped by touring:

- Anyone anywhere is more likely to check out your MySpace page if they see you are coming to town.
- Any promoter in any other city is more likely to give you a gig if they see you are performing in other parts of the country.
- People on the web write about things that happened at shows they went to, not shows that didn't happen, that they couldn't go to...
- Your manager, if you have one, will prioritize you over another (maybe better?) band because you are working harder (unless the other band is Radiohead).
- You can be the eyes and ears for your label, if you have one... or for other bands too lazy or frightened to leave their home base. You can tell them where responses, crowds, sound-systems are good or where 'promoters' are baaaaaad.
- Your agent, if you have one, will pay more attention if you show him you are prepared to perform seven shows a week. That means if he can get you to a point where you are earning \$1,000 a night, then he could

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