

Commuting Tips

According to a survey conducted by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), approximately 81 percent of commuters use only their personal vehicle for commuting and most of them drive alone.

One doesn't typically consider their daily commute the best moments of their day. Rather, many people associate commuting with wasted time, traffic, congestion, annoying fellow passengers, and other assorted aggravations. Given that the average one-way commute to work is almost 30 minutes, commuting can consume a significant amount of the day. Rather than resent your daily commuting routine, try embracing it instead.

Consider other modes of transportation. This may be predictable advice, yet it's worth considering. Seek out a bus or train route and give it a try. Live close to work? Consider biking or walking. Do you live near fellow commuters who work in a similar area? Start a carpool. Nonprofit organizations like RideShare (www.rideshare.com) can facilitate carpooling, and bike-sharing is another option that is currently being established in various cities. While they aren't always viable and often require more advance planning, alternative modes of transportation can offer you a respite from the stress and costs associated with driving alone. You may also be able to reap some financial rewards through bike-to-work and/or carpool incentives in your area—check with your state or local transportation department.

Seek out an alternative route and schedule. Identify alternative routes that you can take in the chance of

traffic delays. In addition, try leaving for work an hour earlier in the morning or an hour later after work in order to avoid rush hour traffic. If you cannot be flexible with your work schedule, use the extra morning hour to have a leisurely breakfast or brisk walk near your workplace. Perhaps use the evening hour to exercise, catch up on errands or make overdue phone calls to family and friends.

Educate yourself. How long have you been thinking about learning Italian? Or reading a book on U.S. history? Regardless of how you commute, technology has provided us with educational and entertainment options, which can change your view of commuting. Rather than viewing it as wasted time, commuting can be a time to pursue personal interests that you may not otherwise have time for. Look for downloadable audio books and foreign language lessons on the internet, or try your local library for books on tape or CD.

Alter your mindset. Much of the stress associated with commuting occurs when dealing with other drivers or road conditions that are out of our control. Rather than taxing your mental and physical health with stress, headaches and anger, take on a more relaxed approach by giving yourself plenty of time to commute so you don't feel the need for the 'race' mentality.

To speak with an EAP professional, please call: **800.327.2384**

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