



Employee Assistance Program

Commuter Stress

Do you get out of your car with a queasy stomach, a headache and your blood pressure registering through the roof? Stress is probably the culprit. In a study conducted at the University of California at Irvine, researchers found that the stress of commuting takes a major toll on health and that there are direct physiological effects as a result of the stress involved.

Although there isn't an antidote for stressful commuting, there are many ways to limit stress.

1 Prepare in advance. By getting your clothing and work necessities together and possibly packing a lunch the night before, you can save your morning time for eating a good breakfast, enjoying special moments with the family, or possibly an earlier start free from congestion.

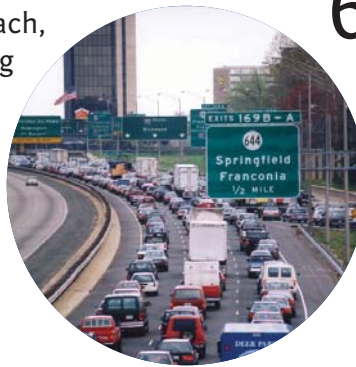
2 Sleep well and wake up early. A good night's sleep rejuvenates the body. Make sure you get enough sleep or you could find your mood faltering mid-day.

3 Juggle your work hours. If possible, flexing the typical 9-5 to either a 10-6 or an 8-4 schedule allows lighter traffic both on your way to work and on your way home.

4 Share your ride. It may be a hassle to coordinate your arrival and departure with another person or two, but carpooling is worth it. Public transportation is another way to avoid the drive and use that time more productively. Studies show that ridesharing lowers commuter stress significantly.

5 Cocoon in your car. Instead of getting worked up when traffic is at a standstill, utilize your time wisely. Listen to the radio or pop in an audio-book or language learning

program to take your mind off of the stop-and-go.



6 Pillow your back and squirm. Lumbar support helps to maintain the natural position of the spine while standing, which is less stressful than while sitting. Shifting in your seat moves pressure to different parts of your lower back, buttocks and legs which helps circulation.

7 Work out after work. Evening commutes are compounded by fatigue from the workday. Working out directly after work will rejuvenate your body while you wait for the heaviest amounts of traffic to subside - making for an easier drive home.

8 Give yourself a break. Compressed or longer work days may mean you could have an extra day a week off to yourself if your company allows it.

9 Move your office. If telecommuting is a possibility, a change in schedule even two days a week will make you feel less tense and in control.

Getting Help

Remember...Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can offer additional help and recommend appropriate resources.

The EAP is confidential and voluntary. It offers professional assessment, short-term counseling, and referral services for you, your co-workers and family members, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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