

# Ten Tips for the Overextended Commuter

by

Dr. Marie A. Mastria, CLC, PCC

[www.commuter-assist.com](http://www.commuter-assist.com)

Do you know a commuter who isn't overextended because of the commute he or she must take to reach the office? Well then, you know someone who is using the tips outlined below. However they got there, any commuters who are at ease with their commute and not overextended because of the time and expense of the commute, has found the secrets to making the commute work for them.

According to federal statistics, workers are making longer commutes than in the past. More people are traveling greater distances to work. There are more cars on the road and public transportation is very crowded. Most people are resigned to the inconvenience and stress of long commutes. Others are willing to tackle the commute more aggressively. And that is the first key to saving some of the time, money and energy that a commute takes away.

Below are listed ten tips that may save you time, money and energy. Even using one or two of the tips will make a change in what you pay to live a distance from your work.

1. Make a plan. Think about what in the commute is taking your time, money and energy and do something about it.

Commuting is expensive and might even be a major expense in your budget. This expense might lead to energy-sapping stress as you worry about the output of so much money. Taking steps to adjust this output will limit your energy and money concerns.

How can this be done? You might share a ride with someone, carpool, vanpool bike, walk, or use Transit. [WWW.spcregion.org](http://WWW.spcregion.org) lists all these options and how to find a group to share the experience with. There is even an emergency ride home program that helps put to rest the main fear of those who are thinking of using alternatives to the private car – what happens if there's an emergency at home or I get sick at work. This service provides a ride home for the low price of registration. Even if you can't always use an alternative, you will get some relief if you trade in your car at least part of the time.

2. Assess your needs regularly. You might have gotten into a rut that no longer works for you. The greatest assessment is around the job itself. Does it still meet your desires and requirements? Should you be thinking of moving on to another company or type of position?

The other assessment centers around your home location. Does it still serve you to be living where you do and commuting? Often, after a time, people find that moving so far from their work is no longer what they want. It is something to assess from time to time.

3. Be prepared. Be ready to walk out the door without searching for car keys, airline tickets, money. Some like to prepare the night before, others over the weekend. This is an especially useful tip if you have children to drop off at daycare. Getting the older

ones into the habit of preparing for themselves will lessen your time and energy output even more.

4. Commuter's needs change seasonally. Just the awareness and acceptance of this can have a positive impact on the energy expended on commuting. Some commuters who normally fly to other cities or states for work, use their cars or the train during the winter months then switch to planes once the danger of ice and snow is over.

5. Regeneration, daily, weekly and annually, is important in the life of the commuter. Long distance commuting takes its toll on the body and soul just as it does on the wallet, the car and the time of the commuter. Taking an hour at the end of the day to stretch, do light exercise and defuse by using calming techniques, meditation and relaxation are two, will help regenerate the energy and spirit. This is a good way to be sure stress stays within manageable boundaries.

6. Make healthy choices about what you do during the day. Packing lunches some of the time puts you in control of what you eat and, especially, portion size. Make the choice to walk up the stairs or walk to a distant bus stop. The payoff for these small choices will show in less stress, more energy and even more money.

7. Use tools to make you more efficient. Scheduling is one that could be used more effectively. Try scheduling all your activities, professional and personal, on one schedule. Also try estimating how long a particular activity will take and block that time out. This is an easy way to save time because we tend to complete a task within the time allotted. Give it a lot of time and it takes a lot, give it a little time and it's still done, and just as well. Try it, you will be delighted.

8. Family and social time is necessary to a happy life. It is not optional. If necessary, pencil it into your schedule – and stick to your schedule. This one tip can have a great impact on the health and well-being of your family as well as on your own health.

9. Corporations need to understand that the employee who has the commute under control is a better, more productive worker than the one who comes in harried from the stress of the commute. Those corporations will make provisions for their commuting employees because they value their work. Think about talking to your employer about this. If you are the employer, think how effective this could be in increasing productivity.

10. Commuting is a choice that was made sometimes very long ago. That choice should be reconsidered periodically and whatever steps need to be taken must, for the health of the commuter and all who are close to him or her - family, friends, employer.

Use these tips and see what happens to the negative effects of the commute. My challenge to you is to make the commute into an activity that enhances your work and personal life.

Dr. M. A. Mastria, CLC, PCC, is founder of [www.Commuter-Assist.com](http://www.Commuter-Assist.com) which provides services and products for long distance commuters, their family and their employers, so their time, energy and money are not drained by the commute. Reach her at [info@commuter-assist.com](mailto:info@commuter-assist.com) or 570-839-6394.