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Ten Tips For The Overextended Commuter

By Dr. M. Mastria

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 commuter who is 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. There are web sites that will help you with this, just Google in "share a ride." Or you might take public transportation 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

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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.

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.

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 employee 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. Mastria is founder of

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<http://Commuter-Assist.com>

, a website aimed at helping commuters get the

most out of their commute and their life. Dr. Mastria consults to businesses and provides life, wellness coaching to groups and individuals. To contact her call 570-839-6394 or email

info@commuter-assist.com

The Circle Of Life - The Balance In Life

By Dr. M. Mastria

Balance can be hard to achieve with a long commute, a challenging career, families at home, recreational activities, education goals, and health concerns. Some areas will need more attention at times than others, but overall, what we are trying to achieve is a healthy balance so we can live a successful life.

The Circle of Life is a tool that allows you to see where your successes are and where more effort might be put to make the rhythm easy and smooth. Go through sections of your life and score them based on your satisfaction in that area. This gives you a visual representation of how your life is balanced. Try picturing the circle as a wheel - would it move smoothly or is it bumping along the road? You may need to take some action steps to smooth out the lines of the circle. If you can look at this as the picture of your life, and commit to making changes, some small, some large, life will become rhythmic and satisfying to you. But it takes an assessment such as this and a commitment to the needed change.

Once you have this clearer view on life that allows you to see where you need to balance, create a plan and a commitment to making those necessary changes. Getting overwhelmed and discouraged happens to us all. Take on small changes at first and, once you see results, it will be easier to tackle the bigger changes.

Try using the Circle of Life weekly so you can see the steps that you are making to achieve balance in your life. You may even notice that sometimes your life will be unbalanced in areas that you weren't aware of before, and this will allow you to make changes in those areas as well. The reinforcement of seeing the numbers inch up can be very motivating. Later, you might redo the Circle quarterly or yearly as a check-up. Have fun with this as you gain control of your time, your goals and your life.

The Circle of Life worksheet is available through Commuter-Assist.com. To request it, please send an email to

info@commuter-assist.com

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with 'Circle of Life' in the subject line.

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