

ADVICE FOR COMMUTERS

I live in the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area, which has the fifth worst average commute time in the nation, at 26.5 minutes. But I've had jobs that required a



hour-and-a-half commute each way, and that's not unusual.

Commuting to work can create a great deal of stress, and that stress can bleed into your work life and your home life. But there are ways to make commuting easier. **Leave home much earlier than you usually have to leave.** It may take you 45 minutes to get to work most mornings, but there is always going to be an accident, or construction, or a loose animal in the lanes, and the time of your commute doubles or triples. Unfortunately, employers often don't care why you are late, just that you are late. So arrive early. Get some coffee. Be the first person at your desk -- it's very impressive. Of course, if you have a family or other responsibilities, it may not be viable to give up even more of your time to your commute and employer. **Buy gas on your way home, at a regular location you use all the time.** Never leave gas purchases to the morning -- you'll just make yourself late for work. **Listen to books on tape.** You're not going to learn anything from that wacky morning zoo radio show. Take advantage of the extra time each day to expand your horizons. **Don't work in the car.** Sure, you're making up for lost time -- until you die in a fiery crash because you had your BlackBerry jammed into one ear while you tried to take notes and drink from your Starbucks brushed-metal coffee mug. Work can wait until you get to work. **Carpool.** Many employer offer incentives to workers who carpool. If you can find other employees who live in your general area, this is a great option. But remember you are putting your arrival time in the hands of others. Make sure you have a back-up plan so you can get to work on time if the carpool driver bails. Make sure everyone in the carpool understands that if they can't make it that morning, to give the others as much notice as possible. Also, split the cost of gas evenly. Don't try to get more money from people who live farther away, or break it down by mile, or try to charge for "wear and tear" on your car. Just split the costs evenly -- it's better for everyone. Got any suggestions for commuters? Let us know in the [comments!](#)