



TIME-SAVING TIPS

Taking The Headache Out Of Your Commute

(NAPSA)—According to a recent Gallup Work and Education Survey, Americans spend an average of 46 minutes commuting to and from work in a typical day. When added up over the course of a year, the amount of time many of us spend commuting easily exceeds the two weeks of vacation time that we take per year. During this time spent cooped up in our cars, many of us fret away the time worrying about things like the manic driver who's swerving in and out of traffic or being late for a morning meeting. But commuting doesn't have to produce anxious thoughts or feelings. Take these five easy ways to destress your travel time and transform any commute into a more relaxing experience:

Preparation is everything. To help ensure a smooth ride, spend a few extra minutes the night before planning out your commute. Trip-planning software such as Microsoft Streets & Trips 2008 with Connected Services will help you figure out the best route. You can even access up-to-date information about road construction, accidents and congestion along the way.

Keep your mind productive. Instead of fretting about your time of arrival, make your in-car travel time more productive. Rent a book on tape to catch up on those books that you've been meaning to read or play a language tape. By keeping your mind

active and engaged in a positive manner, not only will you be able to avoid boredom, you can make the most of your commute time.

Switch it up. If your schedule will allow for it, plot out alternative routes to keep things interesting. Even if it takes you five minutes longer to get to work, the change of scenery will make time fly and breaking up your routine will help you stay alert and focused on the road.

Amend your working hours. If you have flexible working hours, adjust your schedule to avoid peak traffic times. Try asking your boss if you can go into work an hour earlier or later and occasionally work from home. This will allow you to recharge those batteries and give you a short break from the stoplights.

Go with the flow or lack thereof. It doesn't take a genius to know that stress takes a toll on health, elevating adrenaline levels and putting us at risk for a variety of ailments. Lose the race mentality. Studies find that most people commute alone, so use this time as valuable "you" time rather than thinking about where you "should be." Stress isn't going to make you get there any faster, so you might as well turn up the tunes and enjoy the ride.

For additional information about Microsoft Streets & Trips 2008 with Connected Services, visit <http://www.microsoft.com/streets>.