

## Commuting

Your daily back-and-forth to work can have a serious impact on your overall wellness. Here's what you need to know and how to make the most of it.

The average American's commute to work is 25.5 minutes each way, according to a report in USA Today. That's about 51 minutes a day getting to and from work, or about 204 hours a year spent commuting. You know that commuting can be a huge pain in the neck—but what does all that back and forth actually do to your body, besides put you in a bad mood when you get stuck in traffic for what feels like the eternity? Read on to see how commuting impacts your mental and physical health—and what you can do to offset the damage.

### Your Blood Sugar Rises

Driving more than 10 miles each way, to and from work, is associated with higher blood sugar, according to researchers. High blood glucose levels can lead to pre-diabetes and diabetes.

### Your Cholesterol is Higher

The same research found that the 10-mile one-way drives were also associated with higher cholesterol levels among commuters. Scary stuff since cholesterol is a warning sign for heart disease.

### Your Depression Risk Rises

The researchers also noted that people with commutes of at least 10 miles each way have a higher tendency toward depression, anxiety, and social isolation. Sometimes it can be hard to determine if your down-in-the-dumps mood is a real problem or something that'll pass.

### Your Anxiety Increases

A new report from the U.K.'s Office of National Statistics finds that people who commute more than half an hour to work each way report higher levels of stress and anxiety than people with shorter commutes or no commutes at all. While there's not much you can do to shorten or eliminate your commute, you can make the most of it by doing something like listening to an interesting audio book.

### Your Happiness and Life Satisfaction Decline

The same report from the U.K. found that people with commutes of any length experience lower life satisfaction and happiness than people with no commutes at all. Riding a bus for 30 minutes or longer was associated with the lowest levels of life satisfaction and happiness, but even if you're lucky enough to bike to work and enjoy the beautiful outdoors, your satisfaction takes a nosedive commensurate to how long you spend doing it.

### Your Blood Pressure Temporarily Spikes

Commuting during rush hour—especially when you're concerned that you may be late to work or to an important meeting—can result in temporary spikes in stress levels that jack up your blood pressure, even if it's normally stable. In fact, a researcher from the University of Utah carried out an experiment where participants were placed in simulated driving scenarios: They were told they

were late to a meeting and had a financial incentive to get to their destination quickly. Half the group was put in high-density traffic; the other half “drove” in a less congested environment. The people who drove in more intense traffic had much higher reports of stress, as well as higher blood pressure. If you feel like you’re always in a rush, it might be worth leaving well before rush hour—even if you arrive at work at the same time as you normally would, you’ll definitely feel less anxious on the drive over.

#### Your Blood Pressure Rises Over Time, As Well

A study of 4,297 Texans found that the farther the participants lived from where they worked—the longer their commutes—the higher their blood pressure was. High blood pressure over time is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

#### Your Cardiovascular Fitness Drops

The same study out of Texas found that people with longer commutes also had lower levels of cardiovascular fitness and physical activity. Cardiovascular fitness is critical for heart health and maintaining a healthy weight.

#### Your Sleep Suffers

The Regus Work-Life Balance Index for 2012 found that people who commute for longer than 45 minutes each way reported lower sleep quality and more exhaustion than people with shorter commutes. To get better a better night’s sleep and feel more rested, regardless of your commuter status, check out our story, “Why Are Modern Women So Exhausted?”

#### Your Back Aches

Spending hours a week slouched over in a car seat (either as a driver or a passenger) has negative consequences on your posture and your back; commuters are more likely to report pains and aches in their backs and necks. To counteract these ill effects, be sure to check out six ways to straighten up your posture.

Adapted from [www.time.com](http://www.time.com)

**Ex. 1 Find the words or expressions in the text which mean the following:**

- 1) to travel to work: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) not wanting to participate in social life: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) to be affected by sth: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) to be connected with sth: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) to decrease dramatically: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) to increase and reach the highest point: \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) to increase sth: \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) a person who takes part in sth: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) related to your heart and veins: \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) extreme tiredness: \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) not considering sth: \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) a pain: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ex. 2 Match the expressions from the two columns into logical collocations:**

- |                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1) a back              | toward depression |
| 2) a pain in           | the most of sth   |
| 3) to offset           | in sth            |
| 4) a tendency          | incentive         |
| 5) a down-in-the dumps | risk factor       |
| 6) to make             | and forth         |
| 7) rush                | the damage        |
| 8) to result           | hour              |
| 9) a financial         | mood              |
| 10) a major            | the neck          |

**Ex. 3 Provide English equivalents of these expressions:**

1) poziom cukru we krwi	7) przeprowadzić eksperyment
2) cukrzyca	8) ruch uliczny o wysokim natężeniu
3) badania wykazały, że	9) zatłoczony
4) niepokój	10) choroby serca
5) współmierny do	11) udar
6) przejściowy	12) wskaźnik

**Grammar corner...**

As you know from our previous lessons, passive voice (e.g. Our company WAS TAKEN OVER by a big competitor) is very often used in English. The important thing is the action itself, not necessarily who did it. There are, however, some uses of passive voice that seem quite strange for Polish learners, because if you translate them, they simply sound grammatically incorrect or stupid. One of them is when you impersonally talk about things that happened to you, e.g. I was given the sack (=I lost my job), I was told you quit (=somebody told me you quit) or She was reported missing (=somebody reported that she went missing).

**Ex. 4 Rewrite the sentences so that they begin as indicated.**

- 1) Somebody announced that the company has gone bankrupt. => The company ...
- 2) Somebody gave me a pay rise. => I ...
- 3) Somebody believes that she's sleeping with the boss. => She ...
- 4) People around the office started a rumour that the CEO is seriously sick. => The CEO ...
- 5) We considered that it was done! => It ...
- 6) We suspect that the package has been stolen. => The package ...
- 7) Somebody told the employees they could go home early. => The employees ...
- 8) Somebody assigned more responsibilities to me. => I ...

<b>GLOSSARY</b>	
<b>to commute</b>	dojeżdzać do pracy
<b>social isolation</b>	izolacja społeczna
<b>to experience sth</b>	doświadczać czegoś
<b>to be associated with sth</b>	być kojarzonym z czymś
<b>to take a nosedive</b>	lecieć na łeb na szyję
<b>to spike</b>	gwałtownie rosnać
<b>to jack sth up</b>	gwałtownie zwiększać
<b>a participant</b>	uczestnik
<b>cardiovascular</b>	krążeniowy
<b>exhaustion</b>	wyczerpanie
<b>regardless of sth</b>	bez względu na
<b>an ache</b>	ból
<b>a back-and-forth</b>	podróż tam i z powrotem
<b>a pain in the neck</b>	coś uciążliwego
<b>to offset the damage</b>	zniwelować groźne skutki czegoś
<b>a tendency toward sth</b>	skłonność ku czemuś
<b>a down-in-the-dumps mood</b>	podły nastrój
<b>to make the most of sth</b>	w pełni coś wykorzystać
<b>rush hour</b>	godzina szczytu
<b>to result in sth</b>	skutkować czymś
<b>a financial incentive</b>	motywator finansowy
<b>a major risk factor</b>	główny czynnik ryzyka
<b>blood sugar</b>	poziom cukru we krwi
<b>diabetes</b>	cukrzyca
<b>research found that</b>	badania wykazały, że
<b>anxiety</b>	niepokój
<b>commensurate to</b>	współmierny do
<b>temporary</b>	przejściowy

<b>to carry out an experiment</b>	przeprowadzić eksperyment
<b>high-density traffic</b>	ruch uliczny o wysokim natężeniu
<b>congested</b>	zatłoczony
<b>heart disease</b>	choroba serca
<b>a stroke</b>	udar
<b>an index</b>	wskaźnik
<b>a vein</b>	naczynie krwionośne
<b>eternity</b>	wieczność
<b>to be given the sack</b>	stracić pracę
<b>to go missing</b>	zaginąć

**ANSWER KEY:**

*Ex. 1*

- 1) a commute
- 2) social isolation
- 3) to experience sth
- 4) to be associated with sth
- 5) to take a nosedive
- 6) to spike
- 7) to jack sth up
- 8) a participant
- 9) cardiovascular
- 10) exhaustion
- 11) regardless of sth
- 12) an ache

*Ex. 2*

- 1) a back and forth
- 2) a pain in the neck
- 3) to offset the damage
- 4) a tendency toward depression
- 5) a down-in-the-dumps mood
- 6) to make the most of sth
- 7) rush hour
- 8) to result in sth
- 9) a financial incentive
- 10) a major risk factor



*Ex. 3*

- 1) blood sugar
- 2) diabetes
- 3) research found that
- 4) anxiety
- 5) commensurate to
- 6) temporary
- 7) to carry out an experiment
- 8) high-density traffic
- 9) congested
- 10) heart disease
- 11) a stroke
- 12) an index

*Ex. 4*

- 1) ... was announced to be bankrupt.
- 2) ... was given a pay rise.
- 3) ... is believed to be sleeping with the boss.
- 4) ... is rumoured to be seriously sick.
- 5) ... was considered done!
- 6) ... is suspected to have been stolen.
- 7) ... were told they could go home early.
- 8) ... was assigned more responsibilities.