

Why Sustainable Commuting is Good for You

Did you know cleaning up your commute can make you richer and healthier?

Rising gas prices and increases in traffic mean our daily commutes are having a bigger impact on our wallets, our health and on our contributions to [climate change](#). Canadians commute for an average of [25 minutes](#) each day and waste about 32 days sitting in traffic every year.

According to [Environment Canada](#), transportation is the second largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions with 23%. Cities that have taken measures to reduce the number of single-person commuters have met with great success. Take [Portland](#), Oregon for example; when they added light rail, buses and over 400 km of bike trails, they were able to slash their carbon emissions to [pre-1990](#) levels.

Walking and Biking

Traveling under your own steam is always going to be the best way to get to work. If it's possible for you to walk or bike to work, you can look forward to saving money, improving your health and reducing your carbon footprint. Even if you only do so a couple of days a week, biking or walking to work can actually make you richer and healthier.

A recent study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine showed that people who biked to work put on less weight than people who did not, even if they were engaged in regular exercise. We need to do 90 minutes of activity daily which is more than most of us can fit into our busy schedules. That's why making it part of your commute is more likely to ensure we get all the exercise we need. Another [study in 2007](#) concluded; "Commuting physical activity, independent of leisure time physical activity, was associated with a healthier level of most of the cardiovascular risk factors."

Public transport is the next best option for sustainable commuting. Here you can save money on gas, car maintenance and insurance and reduce your carbon footprint. If you can take a bus or train to work, you can also use the time productively.

Carpooling and Car Maintenance

Carpool with colleagues who live nearby or use an online app to find a ride. Some popular ones include [Carpool Zone](#), [Carpool.ca](#), [Carpool World](#) or [PickupPal](#).

If you must commute by car, be sure to maintain your vehicle to reduce fuel consumption. From the US [Department of Energy](#): "Under-inflated tires can lower gas mileage by 0.3% for every 1 psi drop in pressure of all four tires. Properly inflated tires are safer and last longer."

You use [about a cup of fuel](#) for every 10 minutes you spend idling, so turn off your engine. Adding flags for your sports team reduces your fuel efficiency by [about 3%](#), while bike racks and storage units add [2% to 8% in city driving, 6% to 17% on the highway](#). Flags, bike racks and storage units create drag which reduces your car's fuel efficiency.

Working Smarter

Opt for teleconferencing where possible rather than racking up the costs and carbon footprint of traveling to meetings. Choose to work from home for a day or two every week. [Studies show](#) that working from home can actually improve productivity.

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