



Better Safe!

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY SAFETY

Whether it's a trip across town or an hour each way to work, endless commuting has become second nature to many working Americans. In fact, in order to put in an 8-hour day at work, many of us will travel 30 minutes or more to and from the office. Over the course of one year, this number equates to 240 hours or six 40-hour workweeks.

So, what does all of this extra time on the road mean for you? Well, if you aren't careful, it could lead to an increased risk for accidents, stress, and even serious health conditions. Check out the 5 tips in this article to help you conquer your commute.

1. Don't get behind.

The most important aspect of a safe and enjoyable commute is time. When we get behind on the drive, our moods suffer and the risks to our safety skyrocket. If possible, try to leave earlier and accept the fact that trying to "make-up" time on the road is a bad idea.

2. Release the rage.

Commuting can either cause or be the result of major stress in our daily lives. One way that you can cut down on the amount of stress caused by commuting is to think of your car as a refuge from the outside world. You can buy a relaxing tape or CD or perhaps try carpooling with your spouse or someone from work. If there are other people in the car, your mind will generally be on the conversation at hand, rather than the guy who just cut you off.

3. Rollin, rollin, rollin.

Another area that will prove beneficial when trying to conquer your commute is to keep your tires in good condition. There are two easy things you can do that will keep you

on the road safely. First, check your tire pressure every time you fuel-up. Low tire pressure will wear your tires out and the extra road friction can cost you big bucks in extra fuel expense. Second, you'll want to get your tires rotated about every 10,000 to 15,000 miles. This will increase the life of your tires and could prevent an unexpected blow out.

4. Service engine soon.

Anyone who spends a lot of time on the road will want to take this point to heart. Your vehicle owner's manual will indicate how often you should take your car in for a tune up or regular servicing—heed this advice to the mile! A breakdown on the road is no way to spend your time and it poses obvious safety hazards that we all can do without.

5. Buckle Up!

It's a no brainer—you've heard it before, but buckling that seatbelt is the best way to help prevent serious injury if you happen to be involved in a motor vehicle accident. **BUCKLE UP!**

The "Gauge Your Rage" Quiz

When you're behind the wheel, do you:

- Commonly feel stress?
- Tend to go through yellow and red lights?
- Make obscene gestures to other drivers?
- Worry about being late?
- Merge without signaling?
- Tailgate the car in front of you?
- Listen to loud music?
- Honk your horn at motorists to communicate?
- Use the phone?
- Eat?
- Speed?



If you answered yes to any of the above, your safety and the safety of those around you may be at serious risk.



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Can Laughter Cure?

Does humor lead to health? One doctor thought so—700 years ago. Henri de Mondeville believed he could cure a patient by “allowing his relatives and special friends to cheer him up, and by having someone tell him jokes...” Humor has long been known to relieve pain and tension, to provide a healthy perspective on life’s problems. Yet somehow it’s been left out of the modern doctor’s medicine bag.

Norman Cousins, a well-known author and editor, helped to put humor back in the bag in the 1970’s. Diagnosed with a potentially fatal disease, he checked himself out of the hospital (with his doctor’s consent) and into a hotel room, where he watched funny movies to ease his considerable pain. He found that ten minutes of laughter gave him two hours of painless sleep. He recovered and wrote a book, *Anatomy of an Illness*, which described how getting involved in his treatment, and including nutritious food and humor therapy had helped him return to health.

Healthy LAUGHTER

When you anticipate a joke, your body starts to get excited. Your pulse, skin temperature and blood pressure go up. As you laugh, your diaphragm gets full range of motion exercise, your lungs pump extra oxygen into your blood, and your face gets a good stretch. If you’re really amused, your arms and legs get into the act in an explosion of mirth. You may be out of breath and even crying by the time it’s over.

And then? You are left limp, in a dramatically deeper state of relaxation than before the outburst. Your pulse and muscle tension are decreased. Your brain produces endorphins—natural chemicals which kill pain and make you feel great. It’s truly a natural high.

No wonder people in chronic pain find relief in laughter. They’re distracted from their bodies, and get a burst of natural pain relief—all in one. And the same goes for you. Don’t wait until you’re sick or in pain—get your daily dose of humor to keep well.

