

Wellbeing Lower Among Workers With Long Commutes

Back pain, fatigue, worry all increase with time spent commuting
by Steve Crabtree

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- American workers with lengthy commutes are more likely to report a range of adverse physical and emotional conditions, leading to lower overall scores on the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index.

Those who do report long commutes are more likely to complain of several health problems. One in three employees with a commute of over 90 minutes say they have had a neck or back condition with recurrent pain in the past 12 months; among those with commutes of 10 minutes or less, the figure drops to roughly one in four. Those with long commutes are also more likely to have been diagnosed with high cholesterol and are more likely to have a Body Mass Index that classifies them as obese.

Commuting Time and Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index Scores

Minutes from home to work	Average index score
0-10	69.2
11-20	68.3
21-30	67.5
31-45	67.1
46-60	66.4
61-90	66.1
91-120	63.9

Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, July 2009-June 2010

Commuting Time and Physical Health

Minutes from home to work	% Who have had recurrent neck or back pain in past 12 months	% Who have ever been diagnosed with high cholesterol	% Obese
0-10	24	20	24
11-20	25	21	25
21-30	26	21	26
31-45	27	22	26
46-60	29	22	26
61-90	30	24	28
91-120	33	27	30

Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, July 2009-June 2010

Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index results point to a connection between commuting and emotional wellbeing. Among employees who take more than 90 minutes getting from home to work, 40% experienced worry for much of the previous day -- significantly higher than the 28% among those with negligible commutes of 10 minutes or less.

Conversely, workers with extremely long commutes were less likely to have experienced enjoyment for much of the previous day or to say they felt well-rested that day.

Commuting Time and Emotional Health

Minutes from home to work	% Who experienced worry much of the previous day	% Who experienced enjoyment much of the previous day	% Who felt well-rested the previous day
0-10	28	88	71
11-20	29	87	70
21-30	31	85	69
31-45	32	84	67
46-60	32	83	66
61-90	34	82	65
91-120	40	80	61

Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, July 2009-June 2010

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/142142/wellbeing-lower-among-workers-long-commutes.aspx>