



Are you driving yourself to burnout?

Commuting length, distance, and means are stress factors that can lead to burnout, said Annie Barreck of the University of Montreal's School of Industrial Relations.

BY CAR:

No surprises: the bigger the city, the more stressful the commute, at least for people traveling by car. Passengers are more likely to be stressed out than drivers because carpooling reduces the passenger commuters' sense of control, which causes them more stress before they've even arrived at work.

BY PUBLIC TRANSIT:

People with long commutes from rural areas via bus or train connections are stressed about uncontrollable delays. The stress carries over into the workplace. But transit users in major urban areas are less likely to have symptoms of burnout.

BY BIKE OR ON FOOT:

Biking is also a mixed bag that is determined by the area the commuter is working in. Commuting by bike in the suburbs is more stressful than biking in the city where cyclists and walkers have access to safety features such as cycle paths and pedestrian crossings, which increase their sense of control over their commute.

Study findings show that the risk of burnout increases significantly when a commute lasts more than 20 minutes. Above 35 minutes, all employees are at increased risk of cynicism toward their job. Barreck believes this should lead employers to adopt flexible commuting arrangements.