



Back to Work: How to Commute Safely in a Post-Covid World

When it comes to commuter-anxiety, people tend to worry about rising train fares, finding a seat on a crowded bus, or dealing with cancelled services.

Now, concern has switched to staying safe, as employees make their way back to work against a global backdrop that is still far from certain.

I've heard lots of anxious voices on this subject, and my single biggest tip for easing the worry is to get organised. Preparing for your commute will help you feel more in control of it, as well as ensuring you'll

have everything you need before you set out.

By contrast, procrastinating, then leaving your rushed preparation to the night before, may have the effect of bringing on negative self-talk and anxiety – which could in turn wreak havoc on your sleep.

However you travel to and from work, you can use the following guidance to help with your own commute, adapting each part so that it works in the best way for you.

How to Prepare

What you'll need:

- 1. Alcohol-based hand sanitiser.** I recommend a WHO-approved 80% alcohol version <https://www.rutpen.co.uk/product/500ml-alcohol-hand-sanitiser/> Although you'll need to buy a minimum of ten 500ml bottles, you can decant these, give bottles to self-isolating loved ones, and you'll have enough to see you through the winter too.
- 2. Two used soap dispensers with hand pumps.** Fill each dispenser with your hand sanitiser, then keep one by the inside of your front door. The other will travel with you, to be kept either in your bag, or at your workstation.
- 3. A two-week supply of disposable or washable face masks (two per day).** I ordered a washable mask from Amazon – there is a wide selection to choose from, in different colours.
- 4. Two kitchen rolls, or two stacks of paper towels.** You'll keep one by the inside of your front door, and the other at your workstation.
- 5. Two plastic bags.** Again, one for the inside of your front door, and the other at your workstation.
- 6. A new plastic credit card holder.** This is for your contactless/Oyster card, to prevent cross-contact from wallets, handbags, and purses.
- 7. Disposable gloves.** Supply yourself with 3-4 pairs a day, for two weeks. I use catering disposable gloves, again purchased from Amazon in bulk. You may not need that many, but it's always useful to keep spares.
- 8. Headphones, and a motivating playlist or audiobook.** (These are optional, though they are also fun and uplifting additions to the list!)

The Night Before – A Quick Checklist

- Have a carrier bag situated near the inside of your front door, along with the decanted hand sanitiser pump and your paper towels.
- In the spare carrier bag, place the other full sanitiser pump, 3-4 pairs of gloves, and paper towels, all ready to take to work.
- Put the card you will use to pay for your travel into the new card holder.
- Have your keys out and ready to use.

On the Day

Before leaving home, check that you've got everything you need. Then, don your headphones (perhaps in just one ear to listen out to any announcements!) and begin your playlist or audio book, ideally to last for the entire length of your journey.

Once you put your phone in your pocket or bag, you will aim to have minimal contact with it. If you are walking to the bus, or to the station, prepare to put your mask and gloves on as you arrive.

If you can, use your designated, plastic-covered payment card straight from your pocket, so you don't have to touch it. On board, try to avoid touching rails, or pressing open/close buttons on doors.

Your place of work should have procedures in place, all ready for you to follow when you arrive. In general, you should empty the contents of your plastic carrier bag onto your desk, then, using the 'ear' area of the

mask, remove it, and place it straight into the now empty carrier bag. Remove your used disposable gloves, and place them into the plastic bag.

Rub in the hand sanitiser for 25 seconds, then place one pump onto a paper towel, and wipe your credit card holder, your phone if you've used it, your headphone wires/pods, and anything else you've touched. The used paper will then go into your plastic bag.

At the end of your working day, leave the plastic bag behind. Prepare to use the second mask, gloves, put your headphones back on – and you're all set for the return journey!

An extra precaution: Don't take a paper book with you on your commute. Instead, pick up a free paper, and dispose of it when you finish your journey.

Returning Home:

- Use your arms and elbows to push open your front door, not your gloved hands.
- Before greeting anyone at home, remove your mask using the 'ear' area, then place it into the plastic bag by the front door, followed by your gloves.
- Rub sanitiser on your hands for 25 seconds, then pump some onto a fresh paper towel and follow the instructions about wiping down anything you've used, as listed above. Don't forget to place the used paper towel into your plastic bag.
- Put your clothes in to wash, then take a shower before changing and relaxing for the evening.

Additional notes: The two carrier bags will need to be disposed of and replaced, and masks washed at the end of the week (if they are not disposable) – all ready to repeat during the following week.

In the meantime, be mindful of touching the contents in each bag, and use your hand sanitiser for 25 seconds after removing their contents.

Best wishes for your journey back to work. If you need any further support or advice, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Stay safe,

Sandie

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