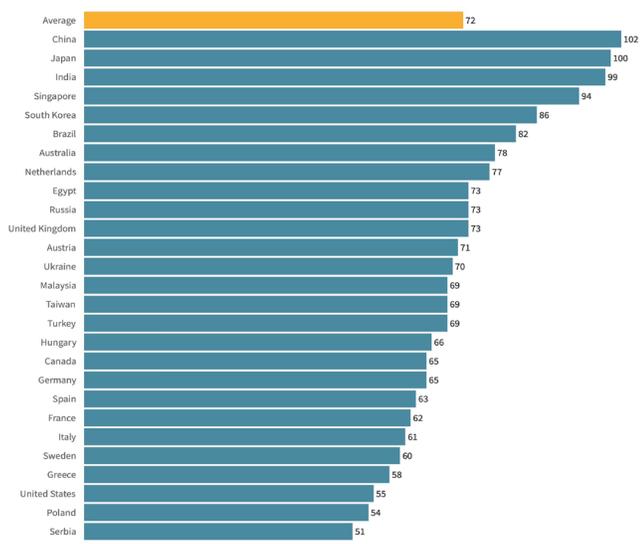


Time Savings When Working from Home

Based on BFI Working Paper 2023-03, [“Time Savings When Working from Home,”](#) by Cevat Giray Aksoy, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and King’s College; Jose Maria Barrero, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México; Nicholas Bloom, Stanford; Steven J. Davis, Hoover Institution and Chicago Booth; Mathias Dolls, ifo Institute; and Pablo Zarate, Princeton and Universidad de San Andrés

Work from home saved about two hours per week per worker in 2021 and 2022, and will likely save about one hour per week per worker after the pandemic ends; workers allocate 40 percent of time savings to work and about 11 percent to caregiving activities.

Figure 1 • Daily Commute Time Savings When Working from Home (Minutes)



Notes: This figure shows coefficients on country dummies in OLS regressions that control for gender, age groups (20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59), education (Secondary, Tertiary, Graduate) and a survey wave fixed effect, treating the raw US mean as the baseline value. The authors fit the regression to data for 18,995 G-SWA respondents surveyed in mid-2021 and early 2022 who worked mainly from home at some point during the COVID-19 pandemic. The “Average” value is the simple mean of the country-level values.

As the authors have described in previous work, the COVID-19 pandemic brought a shift in how people work, with more people expecting to work from home, and employers willing to meet that demand ([“Working from Home Around the World”](#)). This work revisits this issue to estimate the time savings that arise in a new work-from-home (WFH) world when people make fewer commutes.

The authors draw on the Global Survey of Working Arrangements, which samples full-time workers in 27 countries, aged 20-59, who finished primary school. In addition to basic questions on demographics and labor market outcomes, the survey asks about current and planned WFH levels, commute time, and more. The authors find the following:

- The average daily savings in commute time is 72 minutes when working from home.
- When the authors account for the incidence of WFH across workers—including those who never work remotely—WFH saved about two

hours per week per worker in 2021 and 2022, and will likely save about one hour per week per worker post pandemic.

- For a full-time worker, these savings amount to 2.2 percent of a 46-hour workweek (40 paid hours plus six hours of commuting) which, in an aggregate of hundreds of millions of worldwide workers, amounts to significant savings.
- Regarding how workers apply those savings, the authors find that, on average, those who WFH devote 40 percent of their time savings to primary and secondary jobs, 34 percent to leisure, and 11 percent to caregiving activities.

In addition to time savings for workers related to less commuting, WFH home also means lighter loads on transport systems and, in particular, less congestion at peak travel times, with evidence also pointing to reduced energy consumption and pollution, as well as other benefits.

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