

Community



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Mental Wellbeing for Truck Drivers: Coping with Stress and Loneliness on the Road

Life as an over-the-road truck driver can be rewarding, offering the freedom of the open road and the opportunity to see new places. However, it also comes with unique challenges, particularly when it comes to mental health. Long hours of driving, time away from family, irregular schedules, and the isolation of being alone for extended periods can take a toll on a driver's mental wellbeing.

In an industry where physical health is often prioritized, mental health can sometimes be overlooked. However, addressing stress, loneliness, and other mental health challenges is just as important for maintaining a successful and fulfilling career. Here, we'll explore the common mental health challenges faced by truck drivers and provide actionable strategies to help cope with them.

The Mental Health Challenges of Truck Driving

Truck driving is a demanding profession, and the mental health challenges drivers face are often tied to the nature of the job. Some of the most common issues include:

Loneliness and Isolation

Spending long hours or even days alone on the road can lead to feelings of isolation. While some drivers enjoy the

solitude, others may struggle with the lack of social interaction, which can lead to loneliness and even depression.

Stress and Pressure

Meeting tight delivery deadlines, navigating traffic, and dealing with unexpected delays can create significant stress. Additionally, the responsibility of ensuring the safety of the cargo and compliance with regulations adds to the pressure.

Irregular Sleep Patterns

Truck drivers often work long hours and may have irregular sleep schedules due to tight deadlines or overnight hauls. Sleep deprivation can lead to fatigue, irritability, and difficulty concentrating, all of which can negatively impact mental health.

Separation from Family and Friends

Being away from loved ones for extended periods can strain relationships and lead to feelings of disconnection. Missing important family events or milestones can also contribute to emotional distress.

Unhealthy Lifestyle Habits

The sedentary nature of the job, combined with limited access to healthy food options and exercise opportunities, can lead to physical health issues. These, in turn, can affect mental health, creating a cycle of poor wellbeing.

Strategies for Coping with Stress and Loneliness

While the challenges of truck driving are real, there are many ways to address and improve mental wellbeing. Here are some practical strategies to help drivers cope with stress and loneliness on the road:

Stay Connected with Loved Ones

Technology has made it easier than ever to stay in touch with family and friends, even from the road. Use video calling apps like Zoom, FaceTime, or WhatsApp to have face-to-face conversations with loved ones. Scheduling regular calls can help you feel more connected and reduce feelings of isolation.

Additionally, consider joining online communities



or forums for truck drivers. Platforms like Reddit or Facebook groups for truckers can provide a sense of camaraderie and a space to share experiences with others who understand the challenges of the job.

Prioritize Sleep and Rest

Getting enough quality sleep is essential for both physical and mental health. While irregular schedules can make this challenging, try to establish a consistent sleep routine whenever possible. Invest in a comfortable mattress and blackout curtains for your truck to create a restful sleeping environment.

If you struggle with falling asleep, consider using relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation. Apps like Calm or Headspace offer guided meditations and sleep aids specifically designed to help you unwind.

Practice Mindfulness and Stress Management

Mindfulness techniques can help you stay present and reduce stress. Simple practices like deep breathing exercises, journaling, or even taking a few moments to appreciate the scenery around you can make a big difference.

For managing stress, break down overwhelming tasks into smaller, manageable steps. Focus on what you

can control, such as planning your route in advance or allowing extra time for unexpected delays.

Stay Active and Eat Healthy

Physical activity is a powerful tool for improving mental health. While it may be difficult to find time for exercise on the road, even small efforts can make a difference. Take short walks during breaks, do stretches in your truck, or use resistance bands for quick workouts.

When it comes to food, try to make healthier choices whenever possible. Stock your truck with nutritious snacks like fruits, nuts, and protein bars, and opt for healthier menu items at truck stops. A balanced diet can boost your energy levels and improve your mood.

Seek Professional Support When Needed

If you're struggling with persistent feelings of stress, anxiety, or depression, don't hesitate to seek professional help. Many trucking companies offer Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) that provide access to counseling services. There are also telehealth platforms like BetterHelp and Talkspace that allow you to connect with licensed therapists from the comfort of your truck.

Remember, seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Mental health is just as important as physical health, and addressing issues early can prevent them from becoming more serious.

Building a Supportive Community

The trucking industry is increasingly recognizing the importance of mental health. Many organizations and advocacy groups are working to provide resources and support for drivers. For example, the St. Christopher Truckers Relief Fund offers health and wellness programs specifically for truck drivers, including mental health resources.

Additionally, consider connecting with other drivers at truck stops or through social media. Sharing experiences and building relationships with others in the industry can help combat feelings of isolation and create a sense of community.

Mental health is a critical aspect of overall wellbeing, and truck drivers face unique challenges that require attention and care. By staying connected, prioritizing rest, practicing mindfulness, and seeking support when needed, drivers can take proactive steps to improve their mental health and enjoy a more fulfilling career.

Remember, you're not alone in facing these challenges. With the right tools, strategies, and support, you can navigate the road ahead with resilience and confidence. Taking care of your mental health isn't just good for you—it's essential for staying safe and thriving in the demanding world of trucking.





Staying Healthy on the Road:

Tips for Fitness and Nutrition While Driving

Life as an over-the-road truck driver offers freedom and adventure, but it also comes with unique challenges, especially when it comes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Long hours of sitting, limited access to nutritious food, and irregular schedules can make it difficult to prioritize fitness and nutrition. However, staying healthy on the road is not only possible but essential for your overall wellbeing, energy levels, and career longevity.

The Challenges of Staying Healthy on the Road

Truck drivers face several obstacles when it comes to health and fitness:

1. **Sedentary Lifestyle:** Long hours of sitting behind the wheel can lead to weight gain, muscle stiffness, and other health issues
2. **Limited Food Options:** Many truck stops and fast-food restaurants offer calorie-dense, low-nutrition meals, making it hard to eat healthily.
3. **Irregular Schedules:** Unpredictable driving hours can disrupt meal times, sleep patterns, and exercise routines.

4. **Stress and Fatigue:** The demands of the job can lead to stress, which often results in unhealthy eating habits or neglecting physical activity.

Despite these challenges, small, consistent changes can make a big difference in your health and wellbeing.

1. Prioritize Healthy Eating

Eating well on the road doesn't have to be complicated. With a little planning and effort, you can make healthier food choices that fuel your body and keep you energized.

- **Pack Your Own Meals and Snacks:** Bringing your own food is one of the best ways to control what you eat. Invest in a portable cooler or mini-fridge for your truck and stock it with healthy options like:
 - Fresh fruits (apples, bananas, oranges)
 - Vegetables (baby carrots, celery sticks, cherry tomatoes)
 - Protein-rich snacks (hard-boiled eggs, Greek yogurt, nuts, or trail mix)
 - Whole-grain crackers or bread
 - Lean deli meats or grilled chicken

- **Choose Healthier Options at Truck Stops:** When eating out, look for grilled or baked options instead of fried foods. Opt for salads, soups, or sandwiches with whole-grain bread. Avoid sugary drinks and choose water, unsweetened tea, or black coffee instead.
- **Practice Portion Control:** Large portions can lead to overeating. If you're eating at a restaurant, consider splitting your meal in half and saving the rest for later.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Dehydration can lead to fatigue and poor concentration. Keep a reusable water bottle in your truck and aim to drink plenty of water throughout the day. Avoid sugary sodas and energy drinks, which can cause energy crashes.

2. Incorporate Physical Activity into Your Routine

Finding time to exercise on the road can be challenging, but even small amounts of physical activity can have a big impact on your health. Here are some tips to stay active:

- **Stretch Regularly:** Sitting for long periods can cause stiffness and muscle tension. Take a few minutes during breaks to stretch your legs, back, and shoulders. Simple stretches can improve circulation and reduce discomfort.
- **Take Walking Breaks:** Use your rest stops as an opportunity to walk around and get your blood flowing. Even a 10-15 minute walk can help improve your mood and energy levels.
- **Use Portable Exercise Equipment:** Resistance bands, dumbbells, or a yoga mat are compact and easy to store in your truck. These tools allow you to do strength training exercises like squats, lunges, and bicep curls right outside your truck.
- **Try Bodyweight Exercises:** Push-ups, planks, and jumping jacks require no equipment and can be done almost anywhere. Aim for a quick 10-15 minute workout during your downtime.
- **Set Realistic Goals:** Start small and build up gradually. Even 20-30 minutes of exercise a few times a week can make a difference.

3. Prioritize Sleep and Rest

Getting enough quality sleep is crucial for both physical and mental health. Irregular schedules can make this difficult, but these tips can help:

- **Stick to a Sleep Schedule:** Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, even on your days off.

Consistency helps regulate your body's internal clock.

- **Create a Comfortable Sleeping Environment:** Invest in a good-quality mattress, pillow, and blackout curtains for your truck. Use earplugs or a white noise machine to block out noise.
- **Avoid Caffeine Before Bed:** Limit caffeine intake in the hours leading up to bedtime to ensure better sleep quality.
- **Take Power Naps:** If you're feeling fatigued during the day, a 20-30 minute nap can help recharge your energy levels.

4. Manage Stress Effectively

Stress is a common part of life on the road, but managing it is essential for your overall health. Here are some strategies:

- **Practice Mindfulness:** Deep breathing exercises, meditation, or simply taking a few moments to focus on your surroundings can help reduce stress.
- **Stay Connected:** Regularly check in with family and friends to maintain a sense of connection and support.
- **Listen to Music or Podcasts:** Enjoying your favorite music, audiobooks, or podcasts can help you relax and make long drives more enjoyable.
- **Set Realistic Goals:** Avoid overloading yourself with unrealistic schedules or expectations. Plan your routes and breaks to allow for rest and relaxation.

5. Regular Health Checkups

Finally, don't neglect regular health checkups. Visit your doctor for routine screenings and address any health concerns early. Many health issues, such as high blood pressure or diabetes, can be managed effectively with early intervention.

Staying healthy on the road may require some effort and planning, but it's well worth it. By prioritizing nutritious eating, incorporating physical activity, getting enough rest, and managing stress, you can improve your overall wellbeing and enjoy a more fulfilling career as a truck driver.

Remember, small changes add up over time. Start with one or two of these tips and gradually build healthier habits into your routine. Your body and mind will thank you, and you'll be better equipped to handle the demands of life on the road. Safe travels!



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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of USA Trucking Association will be held at 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, Missouri, on Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting or any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

PROXY
USA Trucking Association
April 15, 2026 Annual Meeting of Members
THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF
USA TRUCKING ASSOCIATION

The undersigned member of USA Trucking Association does hereby constitute and appoint the President of USA Trucking Association, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of USA Trucking Association and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

1. FOR [], or to [] WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors:
Tom McMahon, Tom Ebner, and Perry Turnbull
2. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

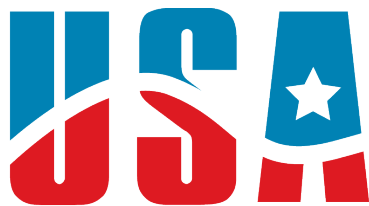
DATED: _____, 2026

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Please date and sign and return promptly to 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, Missouri 63131 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

St. Louis, Missouri
March 9, 2026
Date



Trucking Association

Membership Services Office

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St. Louis, MO 63131

The Community Newsletter is published by:

USA Trucking Association

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Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change. Articles are not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.

USA Trucking Association (USATA) is now partnered with Truckers Integral to Our Economy (TIE). This collaboration empowers you with the advocacy and resources needed to navigate an evolving industry while preserving the flexibility and entrepreneurial spirit that independent truckers embody. Under this partnership, TIE provides USATA's member drivers with robust advocacy on regulatory and legislative matters that affect the independent contractor model. This joint venture emphasizes the critical role that independent truckers play in the U.S. economy and highlights the need to protect your ability to operate as a self-employed professional.