

The benefits of cycling

In line with **'Cycle to work day' which is taking place on the 5th August 2020**, our aim is to encourage individuals to incorporate cycling in to their daily lives and routines.

Whether you haven't cycled in years, have never cycled at all, or usually ride as a leisure activity but want to try cycle commuting; this literature and accompanying webinar will give you 20 reasons why you should dust off that old bike.

1. Reduce risk of COVID-19 contagion

The current advice from the Department for Transport is to cycle or walk when you can. There is a greater circulation of air and less risk you will come in to contact with others when you cycle to work.

2. It is good for the economy

Cyclists are better for the local and national economy than motorists. Cyclists are more likely to stop and shop, benefiting local retailers. If cycle use increases from 2% of all journeys (current levels) to 10% by 2025 and 25% by 2050, the cumulative benefits would be worth £248bn between now and 2050 for England - yielding annual benefits in 2050 worth £42bn.

3. Trim up and lose weight

Cycling to work can be a great way to lose weight, whether you're just starting out or are looking to use your cycling as a way to trim up and shift a few pounds. It's a low impact, adaptable exercise that can burn calories at a rate of 400-750 calories an hour, depending on the weight of the rider, speed and type of cycling you're doing.

4. Reduce your carbon footprint

Considering the average road use of European car drivers, different fuel types, average occupation, and adding emissions from production, driving a car emits about 271g CO2 per passenger-kilometre. Taking the bus will cut your emissions by more than half. But if you wanted to reduce your emissions even further, try a bicycle.

5. You will get fitter

It should be no surprise that cycling will improve your fitness. If you don't currently exercise regularly, the improvements will be even more dramatic and the benefits greater, and cycling is a great low-impact, low to moderate intensity way to get more active.

6. Cleaner air and reduced pollution

Getting out of the car and cycling contributes to cleaner, healthier air. At present, every year in the UK, outdoor pollution is linked to around 40,000 deaths. By cycling, you are helping to reduce the harmful and deadly emissions, effectively saving lives and making the world a healthier place to live.

7. It will save time

For some, cycling can often be a quicker way to get around than travelling by car or public transport. If you live and work in a city, or travel in heavily congested areas, you may find cycling to work saves you time.

8. Explore around you

If you take public transport you likely have no choice, if you drive it's probably habitual, but chances are you take the same journey day after day. By cycling to work you give yourself the opportunity to take a different route, to explore around you. You might find a new beauty spot, or perhaps even a shortcut. Travelling by bike gives you far more opportunity to stop and take photos, turn and look back, or even disappear up an interesting side street.

9. Mental health benefits

A Cycling UK survey of more than 11,000 people found that 91% of participants rated off-road cycling as fairly or very important for their mental health – strong evidence that heading out on the bike is a good way to de-stress and clear the mind. Whether your route to work is on or off road, it's likely to help you clear your mind, boost your mental well-being and lead to long term mental health benefits.

10. Slow down and look around

For most people, riding a bike is likely to be a slower and more sedate way to travel. Embrace it, take the chance to look about and take in your environment. Whether the city streets or a countryside route, riding a bike is an opportunity to see more of what's going on. Enjoy the slower pace, see more of the world around you and appreciate your surroundings.

11. Save yourself some money

While there may be some expenses involved in cycling to work, the cost of maintaining a bike is far lower than the equivalent costs of running a car. Swap to cycling and you'll save money every time you commute. Cyclescheme estimates a saving of around £3000 a year if you cycle to work every day.

12. An easy way to fit exercise into your day

One of the most common reasons for not exercising is a lack of time. Not being able to fit activity in to a day is difficult for a lot of us who are busy with work, home and social lives that are increasingly time-stretched. An easy way to keep fit and healthy is to use active travel – a 15 minute cycle to work each way would mean you meet the government recommended guidelines for exercise of 150 minutes a week without having to lace up a pair of trainers or head to the gym.

13. It'll make you smarter

Just one bout of moderate intensity aerobic exercise for as little as 30 minutes has been found to improve some aspects of cognition, including your memory, reasoning and ability to plan – including shortening the time it takes to complete tasks. Sounds like a good reason to cycle to work.

14. You'll live longer

A recent study looking at commuting found that those that cycle to work have a massive 41% lower risk of dying from all causes. As well as all the other benefits of cycling, you'll make a huge difference to how long you will be around – and we're sure that's a good thing.

15. No more traffic jams – for you, or for everyone else

Fed up of sitting in queues of traffic? It's not good for your happiness levels, and it's certainly not good for the environment. If you switch to commuting by bike, you'll not have to sit in traffic on congested streets and you'll be helping the planet too by reducing the number of cars on the road. Save time, improve your mood, and benefit others too.

16. Boost your immune system

On average, cycle commuting employees take one less sick day per year than non-cyclists and save the UK economy almost £83m. As well as being fitter, getting outside on your ride to work will increase your vitamin D levels with benefits to your immune system, brain, bones and protection against numerous diseases and illnesses.

17. **It's really good for your heart and your health**

A study of 264,337 people found that cycling to work is linked with a 45% lower risk of developing cancer, and a 46% lower risk of cardiovascular disease compared to commuting by car or public transport. As little as 20 miles a week on a bike can reduce your risk of coronary heart disease by half. If that sounds a long way, consider it's just a two-mile trip each way (assuming you work five days a week).

18. **It'll make you better at work**

If you're fitter, healthier and better off – and cycling will do all that – then you'll perform well at work. Research shows that those who exercise regularly outperform colleagues who don't, which is good for you and good for your boss.

19. **Save money**

This may sound drastic – but if you cycle to work you may no longer need a car (or a second family car). As well as no longer buying petrol, you'll save on tax, insurance, parking fees and all the other expenses saved when you don't own a car. Not to mention that if you sell the car, there's a cash windfall you could spend on new cycling gear.

20. **You'll have better quality sleep**

With modern-day stresses, high levels of screen time, disconnecting and falling asleep is a struggle for many people. A study of over 8000 people from the University of Georgia found a strong correlation between cardio-respiratory fitness and sleep patterns: a lower level of fitness was linked to both an inability to fall asleep and poor sleep quality. The answer could be cycling – regular moderate cardiovascular exercise like cycling boosts fitness and makes it easier to fall and stay asleep.

Useful sources & more information:

Some of the information sourced for this article was originally published by [cyclinguk.org](https://www.cyclinguk.org), to access this and more information please visit the links below –

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/20-reasons-cycle-work>

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/campaigning/views-and-briefings/health-and-cycling>

If you would like to view the Webinar on '**The benefits of cycling - In line with cycle to work day**' this is being delivered live on **Thursday 5th August at 12pm**, join us on the day or register now by clicking on the link below to ensure your place:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3703496427407903504>

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.

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