

Cycling



Cycling along with walking, is another great way of getting from A to B. But when it comes to getting on your bike rather than in your car, many of us choose the less environmentally friendly option rather than cycling our short journeys.

It's something most of us could fit more of into our lifestyles. Driving a car on unnecessary journeys is bad for the environment but something that nearly half of us have owned up to doing. According to the Energy Saving Trust, 48% of people in the UK use their car for journeys they could have completed in a more sustainable way at least once a week. Cycling is a greener and healthier way of travelling – and the whole family can get involved too.

On Your Bike

Riding a bike is something that everyone, young and old, can start. All you need to get started, of course, is a sturdy bike. Build up the length of your journeys gradually, starting with a quick cycle to the shops and then slowly increasing the distance as your health and confidence on the road improves.

Cycle Lanes

When you're cycling, be sure you know which parts of the road you can ride on. You'll notice that more and more areas have designated cycle lanes at the side of the road, which is a safer and easier way to ride. If there isn't a cycle lane, wear clothes that enable car drivers to see you easily, particularly at night. You should also invest in reflective lights for your bicycle. Alternatively, look out for paths shared by cyclists and pedestrians and be careful when passing by walkers.

Helmets

It's been a controversial issue, but wearing a helmet is essential when riding your bike. Not only that, but you should also ensure that you are wearing a helmet in the correct size, and in the correct way, in order to maximise its protection. A cycle helmet should be close fitting and properly positioned on your head – without it pushing too far back. If in doubt of which size helmet you should be using, you should refer to an expert's advice in a professional bike shop.

The Environmental Benefits

Cycling beats driving each time when it comes to travelling in a clean, green fashion. Other than the initial costs of purchasing a bike and maintaining it, riding a bike is fuel and cost free. One concern is regarding the inhalation of car and bus fumes when cycling. If you are worried about traffic fumes when driving in the

city, many cyclists use a mask. However, according to the Department of Transport, cyclists and pedestrians may actually absorb lower levels of pollutants from traffic fumes than car drivers.

The Health Benefits

Getting on your bike also helps your health as well as reducing carbon emissions. Riding short journeys instead of driving is a great all-round aerobic workout that works and strengthens your arms, legs and other muscles. As it's an all-round form of exercise, it's also a great fat burner. Riding for 15 minutes to and from work each day, for example, burns off the equivalent of 11 pounds of fat in a year. Not only that, but making cycling a regular part of your weekly exercise:

- Reduces the risk of heart disease
- Lowers blood pressure
- Combats obesity
- Combats diabetes
- Improves coordination
- Reduces body fat
- Improves your mood

