

Active commuting

Overcoming personal barriers

This document is designed to help offer solutions to common personal barriers that staff may come across when thinking about walking and cycling to work. Barriers at an organisational level such as lack of cycle parking facilities, are addressed in other supporting documents in this toolkit.

Lack of motivation

- Sustrans' publications *Why walk?, Why cycle?* and *Active travel and healthy workplaces* state the benefits and reason for active travel. They can be found at www.activetravel.org.uk/toolkit

Personal safety

- it may be possible to find a safer diversion around an area if fears for personal safety relate to certain sections of a route
- if an unsafe route is close to the work site, employees could approach their organisation or local authority about providing additional lighting and/or CCTV
- walking or cycling in a couple or group is safer than doing so alone. If it is not possible to travel with a colleague, web resources such as www.bikebudi.com matches cyclists with others who are cycling the same way, and some local authorities offer bike buddying for organisations.
- staff may feel safer travelling with a personal alarm.

Appearance

- some people may be put off active commuting by fears they will arrive at work hot and sweaty. Choosing a quieter route, travelling at a leisurely pace and allowing enough time to get changed or have a quick shower after arrival will help cool down and feel comfortable

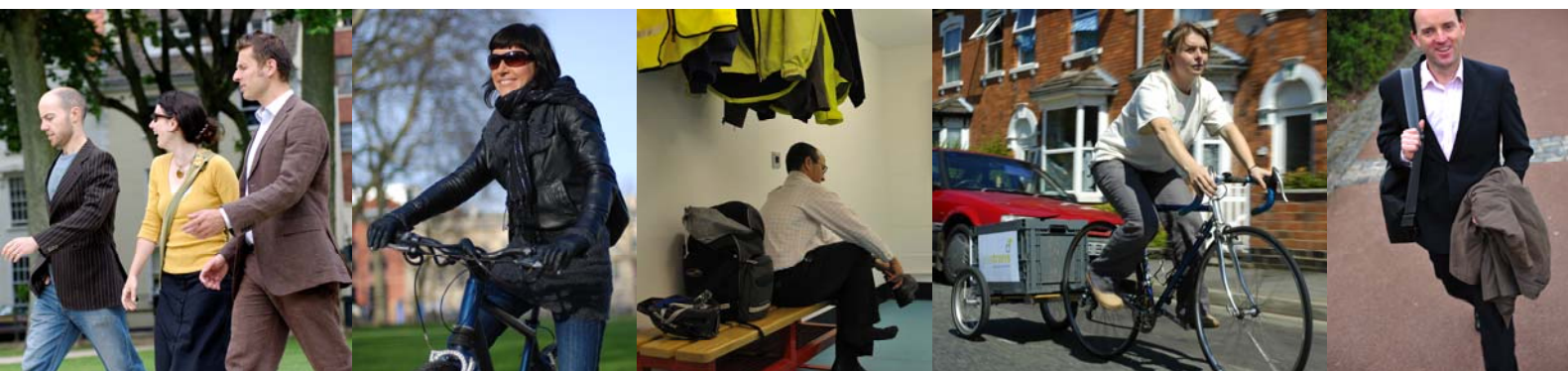
- there may also be concern over appearance whilst travelling, especially when cycling. www.cyclechic.co.uk is a great resource containing practical advice and tips about staying stylish on a bike and an online shop selling fashionable clothes, helmets and other cycling accessories.

Clothing

- staff may be put off active commuting if they are required to wear smart dress or a uniform at work. Suitable changing areas/cloakrooms at work enable staff to change items of clothing or shoes on arrival at work
- staff may benefit from speaking to management about 'dressing down' on days they will not be in meetings/site visits to encourage active commuting on those days
- a culture of semi-casual clothing may encourage increased physical activity as a whole in the workplace as staff who are not restricted by smart clothes or high-heeled shoes may be more likely to do things such as take the stairs rather than the lift.

Transporting equipment and belongings

- small items such as documents, laptop, a change of clothes and general belongings can be carried in a rucksack or shoulder bag when both walking and cycling
- bulkier items such as groceries, larger changes of clothes or larger quantities of files or books can be carried in panniers when cycling. It is





even possible to buy specialised panniers designed to carry suits

- larger items can be transported by bike trailers when cycling, or if they need transporting during the day only, a pool car could be used thus allowing active travel to and from the workplace at either end of the day.

Combining the school run or shopping

- the health benefits for young children travelling actively to school can be substantial and due to traffic congestion many journeys may be quicker by foot or bike than by car
- people often overestimate the duration of walking and cycling journeys and underestimate the duration of car journeys
- large shopping trips such as grocery shopping could be split into several smaller shopping trips over a week and panniers or a large rucksack used. Trips could also be limited to once a week which could be done in the car at the weekend.

Concerns about bad weather

- the frequency and severity of bad weather is often overestimated, and many people find that once they get into the habit of active commuting, bad weather becomes less of an issue
- starting slow and steady as a 'fair weather' walker or cyclist is beneficial as it will encourage habit forming activity, still have health benefits and help cut congestion and emissions
- for the more experienced or determined active commuter, being equipped in warm and/or waterproof clothing is all that is required for walking and cycling in bad weather.

Not feeling fit enough

- feeling too unfit to walk or cycle to work can be a huge barrier to some people. A practical solution to this problem is to start on a small scale and build up
- swapping the car for the bus can be a good first step as this usually involves a walk at either end of the journey. The distance walked can be

increased by getting off the bus earlier or walking further from home to catch it

- as confidence and fitness grows, walking or cycling the whole distance may seem more achievable
- using a pedometer can be a useful tool in monitoring and gradually increasing distance and therefore fitness levels
- walking or cycle with a friend or colleague may also encourage people to take on the challenge of building up fitness.

Lack of confidence

- starting on a small scale and commuting with a friend can encourage confidence building
- if cycling, finding off-road routes or alternative roads which avoid busy junctions can be beneficial, but taking part in cycle skills training is most likely to boost confidence
- walking and cycling in leisure time can help build confidence to actively commute to work.

Lack of awareness of the best routes

- on an organisational level, managers of active travel schemes should be able to provide information on the best local routes for walking and cycling. However, if this information is not available through the work place, there are a number of other places where walking and cycling routes are available:
 - Sustrans provides cycle routes for the whole of the UK www.sustrans.org.uk
 - Walkit provides walking routes for some cities in England and Scotland www.walkit.com
 - Google maps have an option for viewing walking routes www.google.com/maps
 - free walking and cycling maps for London www.tfl.gov.uk
 - Local councils and authorities often produce free walking and cycling maps of the area.

To find out more visit www.activetravel.org.uk/toolkit