



Cycling to Work



Research indicates that lack of physical activity is a major cause of disease in Australia. For some of us, our excuse will be that we don't have the time to fit into our busy schedules workout sessions. How about it though if you "take the gym to work" regularly? Do this and you will be bound to live longer.

In fact, the health benefits are so great that we are told you will probably live an extra 10 years, be a lot healthier and not be overweight. Research over 14 years has found that people who did not cycle to work regularly had a 39 per cent higher mortality rate than those who did. This is primarily a result of not getting enough physical activity.

By taking the bike to work as opposed to car, it is possible to save up to \$50 a week through the reduction in parking fees, fuel and vehicle maintenance costs. Another benefit to cycling in to work is that traffic congestion will not be a concern for you in slowing down your journey. Congestion never affects bikes. You will then be assured that your traveling time to and from work will be consistent from day to day. Also, no more road rage and you will arrive, hopefully, stress free.

If you are one who dwells on the issue of being able to find the time to do exercise then think about this. Consider and add up the time that you potentially waste sat in the car, on the bus or train where you gain little benefit. This time could be spent more usefully by cycling to work instead, giving your body a great workout at the same time. On average a 5 to 10 km ride to work will only take 15 minutes to half an hour. Even if you think you live too far, you can choose to ride to work one day and ride home the next.

How to start riding to work

1. Work out your goal (e.g. in three months I will be riding the 6 km to work 4 days a week). Make your goal a stretching one but one that is achievable for you. Break it down into manageable stages (e.g. for the first month I will ride to work twice a week). This will allow your body to adjust to your new activity without "biting off more than you can chew".
2. Prepare for your first ride over the next two weeks:
 - a. Make sure your bike is working well. You may need do some simple maintenance by pumping up the tyres to their recommended pressure, oiling the chain or take

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- it to your local bike shop for it to be looked over. Use your Cyclaire bicycle pump to get to maximum pressure quickly and easily.
- b. Get a bike map and plan the route. These can often be found online.
 - c. Consider making a trial ride over the route on the weekend. This is a good opportunity to see how long it takes without the pressure of doing it on a work day when you will no doubt be tied to a start time.
 - d. Find a comfortable backpack for your gear.
 - e. Ensure you are prepared at your workplace. You might have to make enquiries at work to find out where to lock your bike. If you have a folding bike then this can be easily stored in an office.
 - f. If you are going to need a shower at work, take in some toiletries and a towel and arrange to get a locker or, at least, somewhere safe to store your belongings.
3. Keep doing it and you certainly reap the benefits. Remember to phase yourself by building up the number of times you cycle in, starting at several times a week perhaps and then maybe progressing to three times, then four then every day. Unless you are pretty fit to start with you will probably find that you'll need to be kind to your body and give it a bit of time to adjust. Legs and bottom will probably feel it most to start with! Before long, you will be riding regularly, getting fit and saving money. You'll be amazed by the number of interesting things that you notice around you on your ride that you will have missed out on by traveling by car, bus or train.
 4. If you live a long way from work and are on a train route, the ideal solution may be for you to cycle to the station and lock your bike there whilst doing the remaining journey by train. This way, you can incorporate exercise into your daily routine.

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