

## Main content of Newsletter 1

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the Travel to Work study in your workplace. The aim of this newsletter is to give you some support and encouragement to increase walking during your journeys to and/or from work role. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with your workplace Walk to Work promoter or the research team if you have any questions or issues you would like to discuss:

[*Contact details*]

### The Walk to Work programme

We hope by now you have had the opportunity to:

- Read the participant booklet – we hope this will encourage you to consider the benefits of walking to work
- Consider barriers to walking to work and, where possible, identify solutions to suit your circumstances
- Identify safe walking routes including, if appropriate, combining walking with public transport or 'park and stride'
- Set realistic personal goals - not everyone can walk to work every day, but it may be possible to include walking in some of your journeys to and/or from work
- Started monitoring your travel behaviour using the diary pages of your booklet and/or the pedometer

### At this stage it may help to focus on the issue of social support.

- Would it help to get in touch with colleagues who are walking to work so that you can give each other extra support e.g. an email group or informal chat over a coffee break?
- Have you spoken to family or friends about walking to work, and are they able to help with any barriers, or possible solutions you have identified?
- Would you consider trying a 'buddying' scheme to enable people who live near each other to walk to/from work together?
- Are there posters in your workplace about walking which help to create a supportive walking environment?
- Is the workplace offering any support you can tell people about e.g. free umbrellas, improved washing or drying facilities?

Have you made use of any websites that give information and support to walkers?

You may be interested in the following news stories and research findings.

### Walking or cycling to work 'improves well-being'

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-29175088>

The BBC News website, 14 September 2014, reported on research conducted at the University of East Anglia which examined data from 18,000 UK commuters over 18 years. Active commuters, and public transport users, felt more able to concentrate and under less strain than when travelling by car. Lead researcher Adam Martin said: "Our study shows that the longer people spend commuting in cars, the worse their psychological well-being. And correspondingly, people feel better when they have a longer walk to work." In relation to public transport, he added. "You might think that things like disruption to services or crowds of commuters might have been a cause of considerable stress. But as buses or trains also give people time to relax, read, socialise, and there is usually an associated walk to the bus stop or railway station, it appears to cheer people up." The study findings were published in the journal, Preventive Medicine.

### Commuters who shun car travel keep slimmer, study concludes

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-35812984>

Another article on the BBC News website, 17 March 2016, presented the results of a study undertaken at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine which measured and weighed around 150,000 UK adults aged 40 or older and asked them to fill in a survey about their typical journey to and from work. The study showed that people who cycle, walk or catch the train or bus to work keep more weight off than commuters who travel by car. Study author Dr Ellen Flint said "This study shows basically that people who do manage to build some level of physical exertion into their commute, even if it's just walking to a bus stop or cycling a short distance, they tend to be less heavy and have less body fat than people who drive all the way to work." She added that it was important that policy makers and town planners make it easy for people to walk and cycle to work.

### Resources and websites

One of the best videos outlining the health benefits of including walking in your daily routine can be found here: <http://www.evanshealthlab.com/23-and-12-hours/>

The video lasts about 9 minutes and makes clever use of graphics to show the evidence that walking for about 30 minutes a day can reduce the risk of many health problems.

The following website is useful for further ideas about how to increase social support for walking: <http://www.walk4life.info/groups>

Using this website, it is possible to create a group or join an existing group. You may also consider setting a challenge for your group such as the total number of miles walked by the group in one month or more.

### **What's next?**

Another short newsletter will be distributed in about 3 weeks. In the meantime, we hope you will use the travel diary to record your journeys to and from work and especially any opportunities you have to increase walking.

## **Main content of Newsletter 2.**

Thank you for taking part in the Travel to Work study. The aim of this second newsletter is to give you some support and encouragement to increase walking during your journeys to and/or from work. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with your workplace Walk to Work promoter, or the research team, if you have any questions or issues you would like to discuss:

[contact details]

### **Walking to work**

You are now about half way through the Walk to Work programme. At this stage it may be a good idea to remind you of the stages we have asked people to consider in order to increase walking in their journeys to and/or from work. These include:

- Consider barriers to walking to work and, where possible, identify solutions to suit the individuals concerned
- Identify safe walking routes including, if appropriate, combining walking with public transport or 'park and stride'
- Set realistic personal goals
- Self-monitoring using the diaries and/or pedometers

Please let the Walk to Work promoter or the research team know if you would like any more of the study materials to help you to increase walking in your journeys to and from work. These include:

- Booklets
- Pedometers

We will be pleased to provide them for you.

### **At this stage we would like you to focus on the review of goals**

- Check your short, intermediate and long-term goals
- Do they need to be changed to better suit your circumstances or any progress you have made in walking to date?
- If you have stopped walking but would like to start again, do you need any help or encouragement to set new goals?
- If you haven't tried to increase your walking yet, it is not too late to start
- Refer to goal setting on page 10 in the 'Taking one step at a time' booklet

You may find the following news stories and research findings interesting.

### **Goal setting can help you increase your physical activity**

<http://www.alexmaki.com/blog/the-science-of-new-years-resolutions-do-activity-monitors-actually-help-you-increase-your-physical-activity>

Leading health psychologist Professor Susan Michie and colleagues researched which techniques are most effective at changing behaviour, including physical activity, by exploring data from 44,700 participants across 101 studies. They found self-monitoring was the most effective technique, which is when people keep track of their actual behaviour. This was even more effective when combined

with goal setting techniques including: deciding to set a general goal e.g. walking more; forming a specific goal e.g. walking to work twice a week, and; reviewing and adjusting goals over time.

### **Are men more motivated by goal setting than women?**

<http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/press/press-releases/2015/july/men-more-likely-to-achieve-targets-if-they-are-set-goals>

Research at the University of Leicester suggests men may be more responsive to goal-setting than women. 109 participants took part in a task for which they were given no goal, a low goal, or a higher goal. The results suggested that having a goal leads to better focus for everyone. However, the men taking part in the study were more motivated by achieving goals than the women. The research was published in Economics Letters, and was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

### **Walk 20 minutes to live longer**

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2910206/Lack-exercise-kills-TWICE-people-obesity.html>

Mail online, 13 August 2015

A large study of 334,000 people found that a brisk walk of just 20 minutes per day can add years to your life. The researchers said lack of exercise killed twice as many people as obesity. Those who are obese could expect a 16% reduced risk of dying early; and those with a healthy weight could benefit by 30%. Professor Ulf Ekelund, who led the study, said: "Just a small amount of physical activity each day could have substantial health benefits for people who are physically inactive." The study was reported in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

Walking improves creativity

<http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/give-ideas-legs-study-finds-walking-improves-creativity/>

Have you ever found yourself walking around in order to think? A study by Stanford researchers suggests this urge to move may be important for creative thinking. The research involved 176 students and other adults who were asked to complete tasks commonly used by to assess creative thinking. Creativity levels in people rose by an average of 60% if they walked instead of staying seated. Marily Oppezzo, a Stanford doctoral graduate in educational psychology, said: "This study is another justification for integrating bouts of physical activity into the day. We'd be healthier, and maybe more innovative for it."

### **Resources and websites**

The following website gives 10 useful tips for walking to work:

<http://walking.about.com/od/pedestrians/a/walktoworktips.htm>

Here are some links to free pedometer apps for your smartphone:

<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/pedometer++/id712286167?mt=8>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.tayu.tau.pedometer>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.runtastic.android.pedometer.lite&hl=en>

## **Main content of Newsletter 3**

Thank you for continuing to be part of the Travel to Work study. In this third and final newsletter are some more ideas and information which we hope will encourage you as you try to include more walking in your journeys to and from work. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with the Walk to Work promoter in your workplace, or the research team, if you have any questions or issues you would like to discuss:

[*Contact details*]

### **Walking to Work**

Please let the Walk to Work promoter or the research team know if you would like any more of the study materials to help you to increase walking in your journeys to and from work. These include:

- Booklets
- Pedometers

We will be pleased to provide them for you.

Throughout the programme the aim has been to encourage people to consider the following issues in order to increase walking in their journeys to and/or from work:

- Barriers and solutions to walking to work

- Safe walking routes including, if appropriate, combining walking with public transport or 'park and stride'
- Realistic short, medium and long-term personal goals
- Self-monitoring using the diaries and/or pedometers

**At this stage we would like you to consider how much progress you have been able to make in increasing walking, and to offer you some final support or encouragement.**

- You may have found it impossible to include more walking in your journey to work. If so, you may be able to consider other ways to include walking in your daily routine.
- You may have started to increase walking during your journeys to and from work and then given up due to a set-back. Sometimes it takes a few attempts to find out what works and what doesn't. If you can, it is worth trying again. Many people try more than once before adopting new routines.
- You may now be regularly walking during your commute. If so, well done! We hope you are enjoying your journeys to and from work, and already noticing some of the benefits. Here are some more news stories and research findings to encourage you to walk more in your journeys to and from work.

### **The health benefits of walking to work**

[http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2013-08/icl-wtw080513.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2013-08/icl-wtw080513.php)

People who walk to work are less likely to have high blood pressure than those who drive. Researchers at Imperial College London and University College London examined survey data relating to 20,000 people across the UK. People who walk to work were 17% less likely than people who drive to have high blood pressure. The findings were published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Anthony Laverty, from the School of Public Health at Imperial College London, said: "This study highlights that building physical activity into the daily routine by walking, cycling or using public transport to get to work is good for personal health."

### **How long does it take to form a habit?**

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/news-articles/0908/09080401>

It takes an average 66 days to form a new habit, according to research by Phillippa Lally and colleagues at University College London and published in the [European Journal of Social Psychology](#), 2009. Habits are behaviours which are 'automatic' because they have been performed frequently in the past. The study showed that missing one opportunity did not significantly undermine habit formation, but people who were very inconsistent in performing the new behaviour were less successful. Those who want to form a new habit should specify what they will do and in what situation, and try to be consistent. Over time it will happen more easily and require less effort.

### **Old commuting habits die hard**

<http://phys.org/news/2015-04-commuting-habits-die-hard.html>

Walker et al. Old Habits Die Hard: Travel Habit Formation and Decay During an Office Relocation." Environment and Behavior, 2014. DOI: 10.1177/0013916514549619

The way we travel to work often becomes a habit but when the WWF moved office there was an opportunity to encourage staff to make changes: free parking was removed and subsidies were offered for public transport. Around 200 staff members completed surveys which showed: Train use increased from 19% before the move to 56% immediately afterward and remained steady; car use dropped from 55% to 23% and then rose slightly. Even very environmentally conscious people still had the urge to drive after a month, suggesting long-term support is important for people who change to active travel.

### **Factors that support walking to work**

[http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2013-05/ps-wob052913.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2013-05/ps-wob052913.php)

Health researchers suggest that people who walk to work are likely to influence their colleagues and partners to do the same. The wider community and employers also influence whether people choose to actively commute. In the online issue of the American Journal of Health Behavior, Melissa Bopp, Penn State Assistant Professor of Kinesiology, and colleagues reported on a study examining the connection between interpersonal relationships and active travel. Having a spouse or co-workers who actively commute had a positive influence on the decision to do the same. Other factors that support active commuting include working for an employer who supports active travel and believing that the community is supportive of pedestrians and bicyclists.

### **Resources and websites**

Some practical advice for walking in winter:

[http://www.weightwatchers.com/util/art/index\\_art.aspx?tabnum=1&art\\_id=239](http://www.weightwatchers.com/util/art/index_art.aspx?tabnum=1&art_id=239)

Some top tips to make walking part of your everyday life:

<https://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/keep-walking/top-tips-stay-motivated>